寿命を買い取ってもらった。

一年を一万円で

I sold my life for ten thousand yen per year.

2

the second volume

JUMP COMICS+

三秋縋 × 田口囁一

（メディアワークス文庫「三日間の幸福」）

キャラクターデザイン：E9L・田口囁一

寿命を買い取ってもらった。一年につき、一万円で。

I Sold Off My Lifespan, For 10,000 Yen A Year.

Chapter 7

Original: Sugaru Miaki **Manga:** Shoichi Taguchi
("Three Days of Happiness" from Media Works Bunko)
Character Design: E9L / Shoichi Taguchi

What Himeno and I were waiting for

was "something" that validated our existence,

"something" that made up for everything.

And if they don't, it won't be worth it.

... About Ms. Himeno.
Circumstances led her to give birth to a child at seventeen.

She then dropped out of high school and married at eighteen, but divorced two years later.
Now, at twenty, she's raising the child by herself.
...

And in two years' time...
she will be jumping to her death.

Are you making a thousand paper cranes?

To wish myself a happy life as I head toward death.
To what end?
You intend to do this all by yourself?

I filled the drab apartment with paper cranes of many colors.
I enjoyed the pointless work.

881...
882...
883...
!
As I went through recounting the cranes,
I found many that were too good to believe I made them.

These ones must have been folded
by a certain nosy individual while I slept.

That went way too quickly...

when checking the pockets of my jeans...

The night I finished folding cranes,

I found the letter I'd taken from the time capsule.

!

To me ten years from now

You're the only one I can count on to do this.

It went like this.

If I'm still on the shelf in ten years,

I want you to meet Himeno.

Because Himeno's hopeless without me,

and I'm hopeless without Himeno.

Sure,
it might just bring me even more pain.
But,
until I see it with my own eyes,
I can't give up.

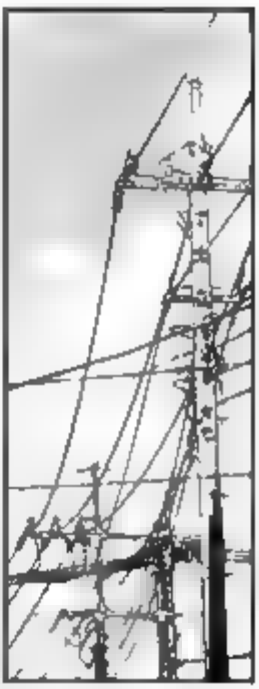
Just one last time,
And...
I want to talk with her.
As thanks for giving me life,
I want to give her the 300,000 yen I got from selling it.

I won't stop you.
I can't say I don't understand the feeling myself.

Maybe even tomorrow,
I'm thinking of going to Himeno's house.
You know if she's at her parents' place?
Indeed.
It seems she's been depending on them ever since her husband left.

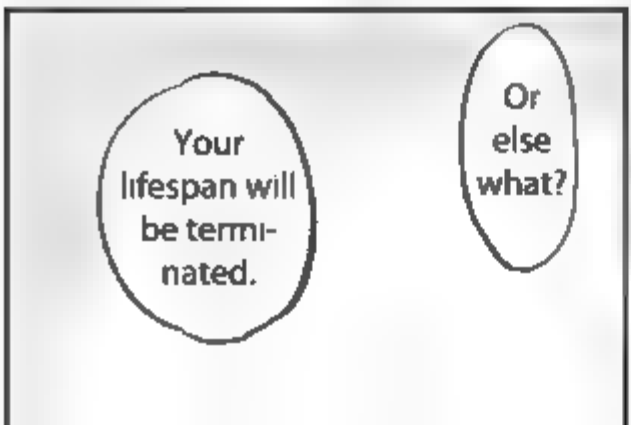
!
Don't bring up her name so lightly
don't want to hear it out of your mouth
shameless
I'll be more cautious henceforth
Is that so.
...

whew
Don't mention it.
...Thanks.



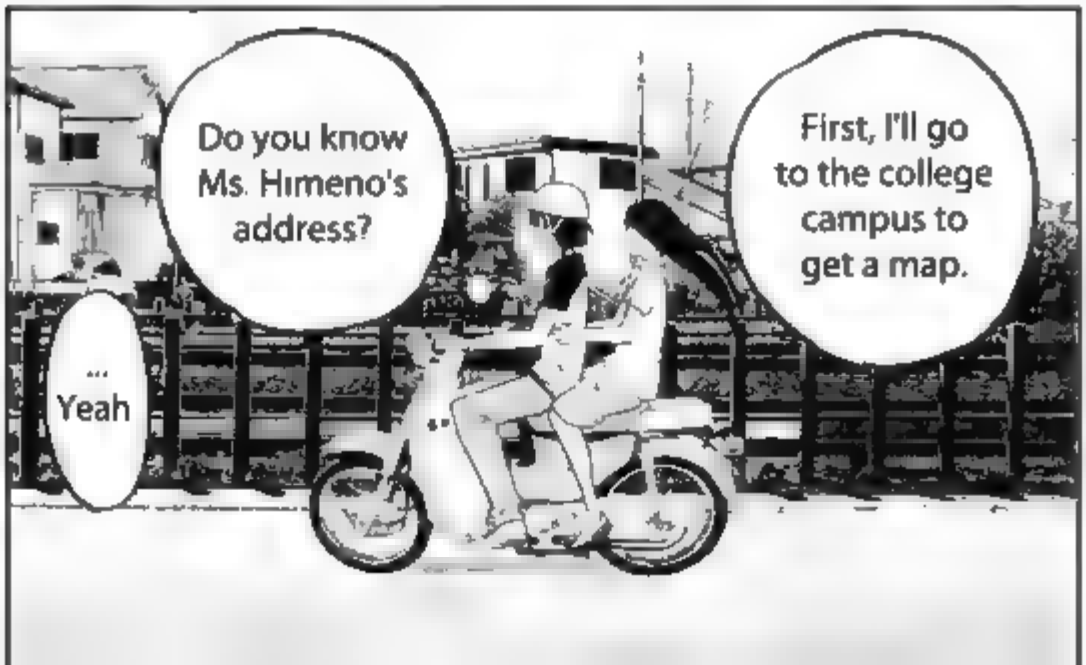
must not be separated by any more than 100 meters.
An observer and their target

I must apologize, but...
I can't let you go too far on your own.

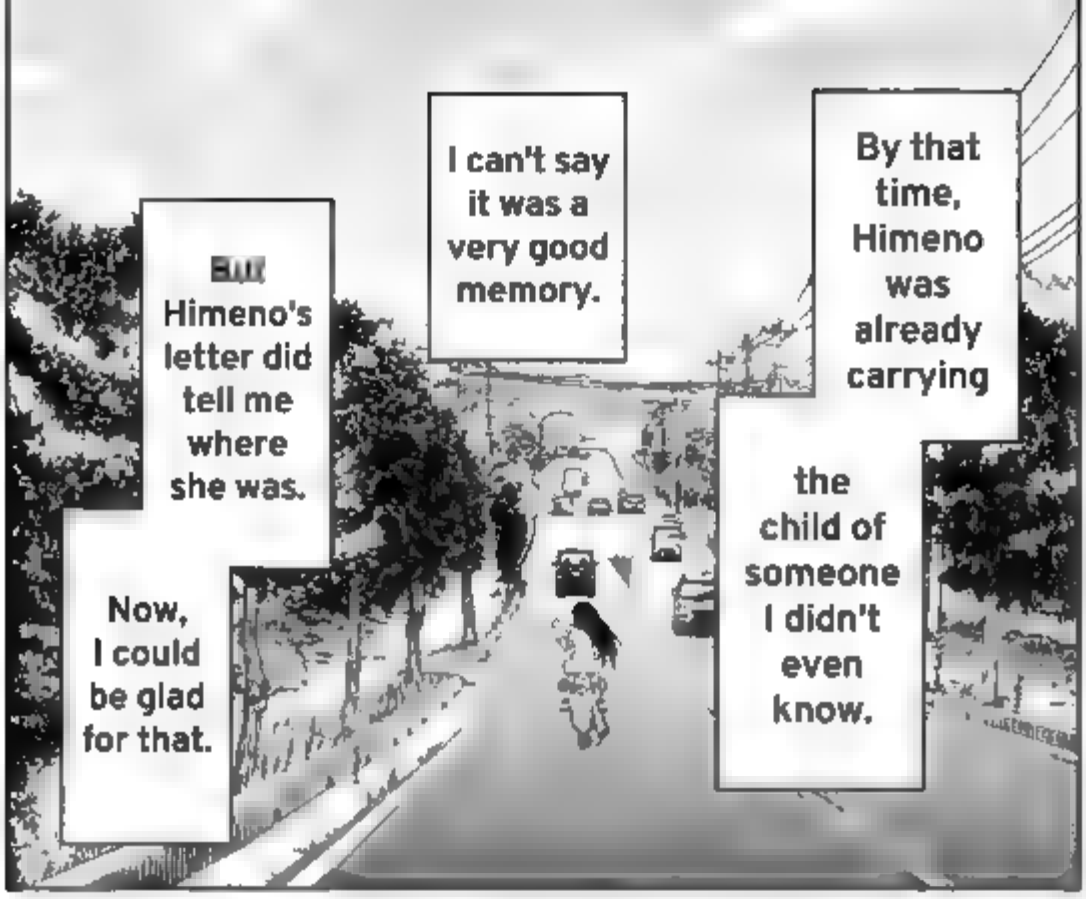

Your lifespan will be terminated.
Or else what?

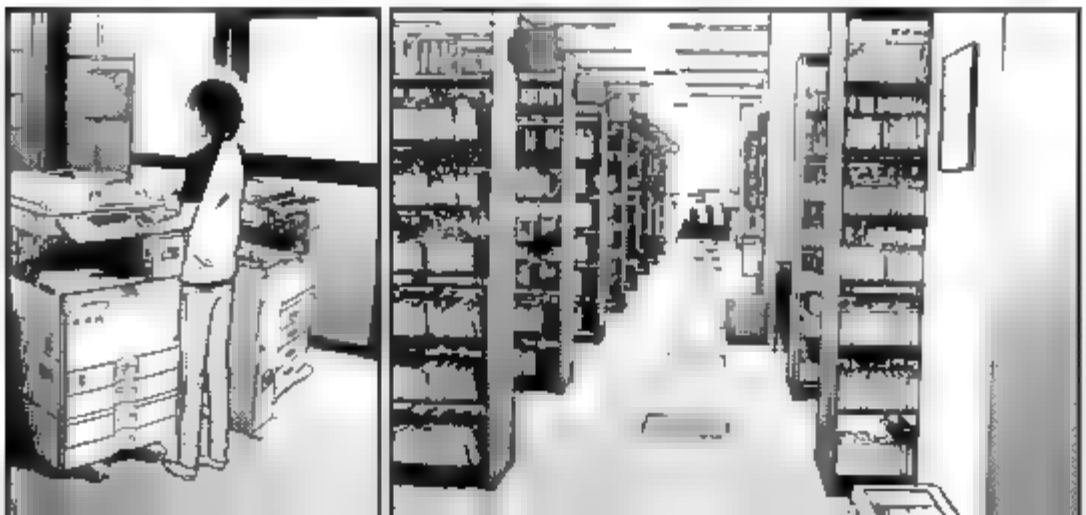
Then we will be able to use it.
I guess it *can*.
seat two, does it not?
.However, this bike does
No way
It won't bother
So long as you aren't vehemently opposed to me riding.
brrrrrm...

Pardon me.


Do you know Ms. Himeno's address?
First, I'll go to the college campus to get a map.
... Yeah

I did get a letter from Himeno.
Just once,
I couldn't help but think it didn't sound like Himeno at all....
No hint of sarcasm or an insulting word
and other frivolous things.
She wrote about how she was busy with studies,
Never got a reply.
But in the end, I answered with a similarly banal letter.


But
Himeno's letter did tell me where she was.
Now, I could be glad for that.
I can't say it was a very good memory.
By that time, Himeno was already carrying
the child of someone I didn't even know.



how would you spend your last months?
but if you were in my situation,
This isn't really a meaningful question,
Hey.
I don't think I'd know until I was in that position
Hmm..
but you shouldn't talk to me in places like this.
Um, I know I told you before,
glance
glance
?

I am a strange guy.
Let 'em.
They'll think you're a strange person who talks to himself

Better to remembered as a weirdo than not remembered at all.
In fact, I actively wanted to be weird.

there are three things I would absolutely want to do.
If I myself had only a few months left to live,
About that question you asked.
I've been thinking.
...
Um.

The first, to go to a certain lake
The second, to make a grave for myself
And the third:
to go see a person who was important to me.
much like what you're doing,
That's about all.

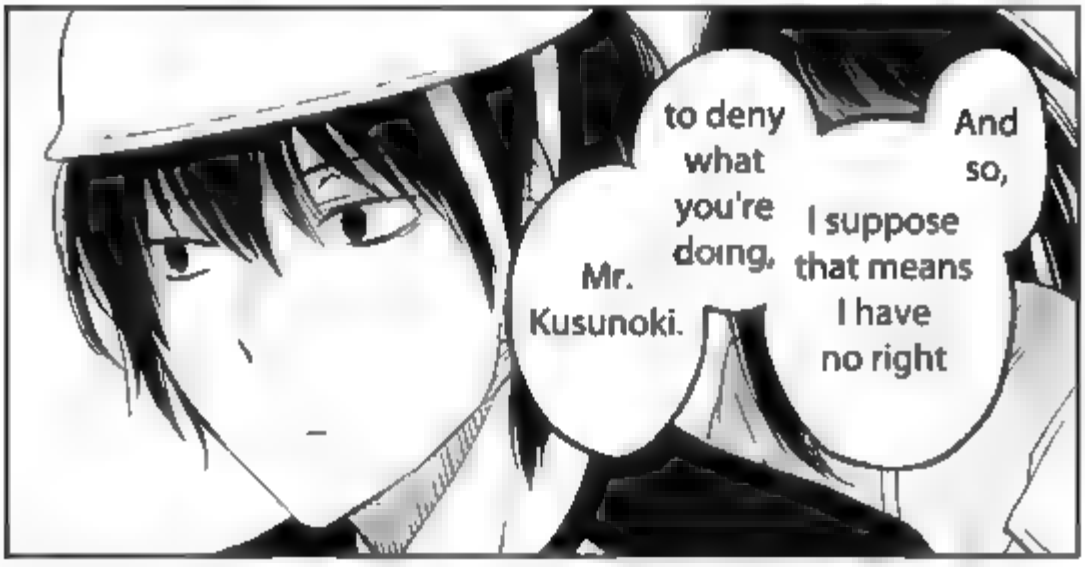
The lake is just a lake.
But I do recall, from my childhood,
the view of the stars there being quite beautiful.

Not really sure I get it.
How about a little more info?

There are, no doubt,
more beautiful sights in the world,
but as far as those I "know,"
that starry lake is the most.
I see.

...And about the "person who was important to me"...
...So the grave, you mean you wanna buy a good piece of land?
No. Strictly speaking, if I just found a nice large rock and decided "This is my grave," even that would be fine.
What's important is that whatever I decide to be my grave remains for at least a couple decades.
Well, I'd rather not tell you, Mr. Kusunoki.
Huh.
I suppose it's a guy?
Hm You would suppose right.

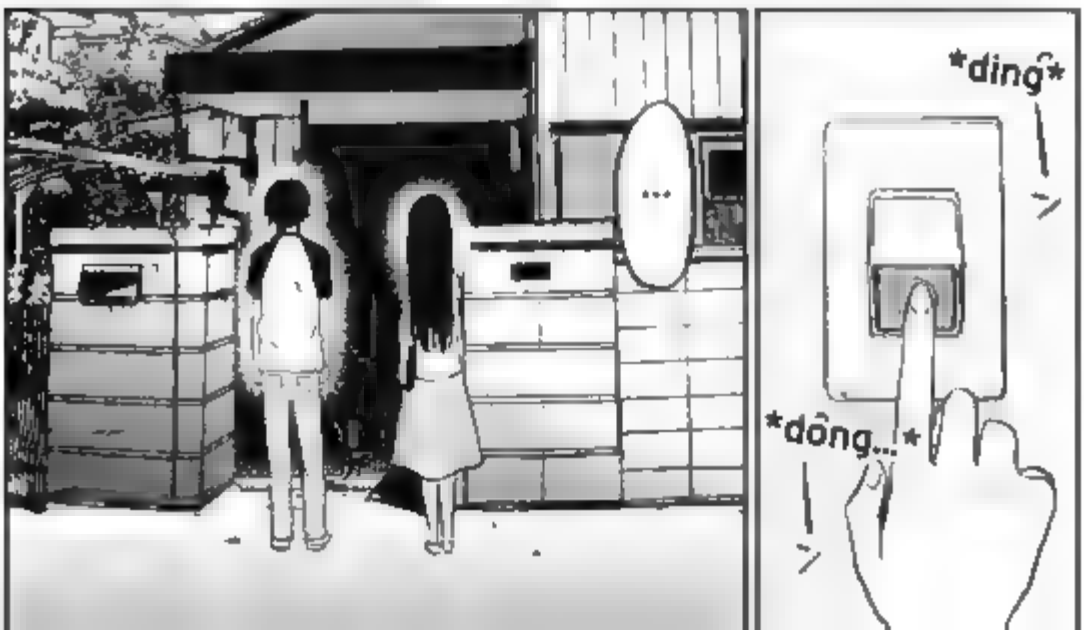
I too would still go to meet them, in the end.
I think, as much as it might hurt me, as much as I might be dis-appointed,


Mr. Kusunoki.
to deny what you're doing.
And so, I suppose that means I have no right

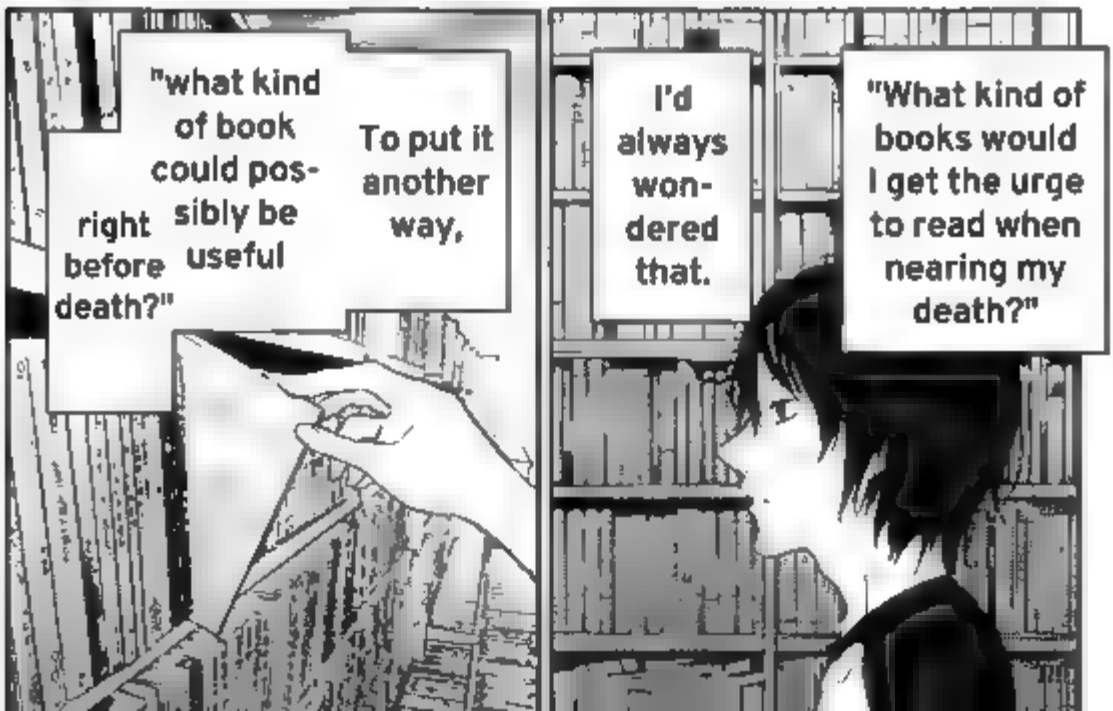
Well, I don't know anything about my own future
Talk about out of char-acter. A lot more timid when it's about you, huh?

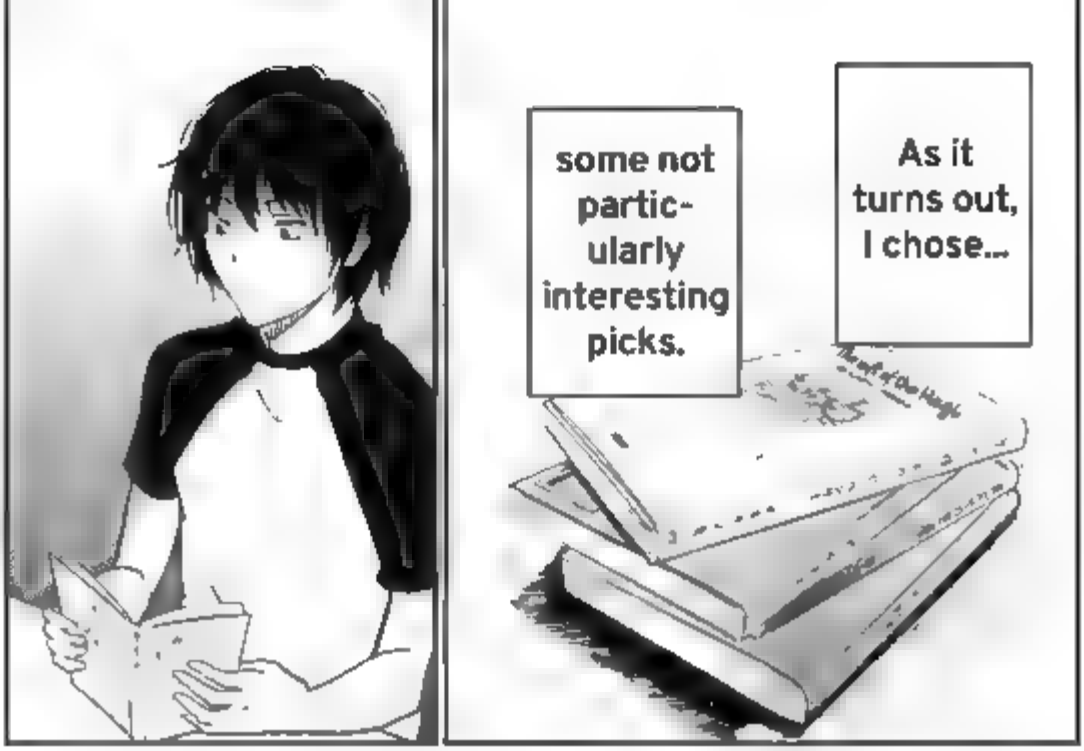
Himeno

There aren't any other "Himeno" houses around.
Guess this must be the one.


...
ding
dông...

Let's waste some time.
Maybe somebody'll come home at night.


"what kind of book could possibly be useful right before death?"
To put it another way,
I'd always wondered that.
"What kind of books would I get the urge to read when nearing my death?"


some not partic-ularly interesting picks.
As it turns out, I chose...

scoot

Some-thing like that
Wanting to try observing and reading at the same time?

Read-ing like this, I wasn't just thinking about how I felt,

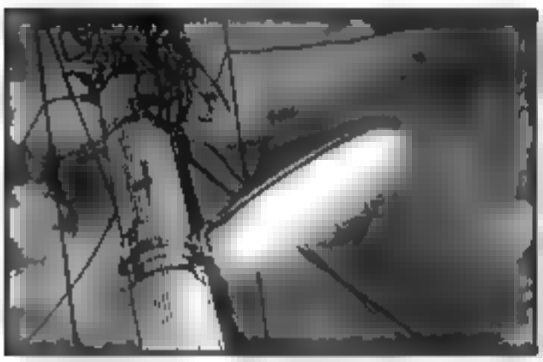
but also how Miyagi felt reading the same part.

Having that aware-ness seemed to make for more enriching reading.

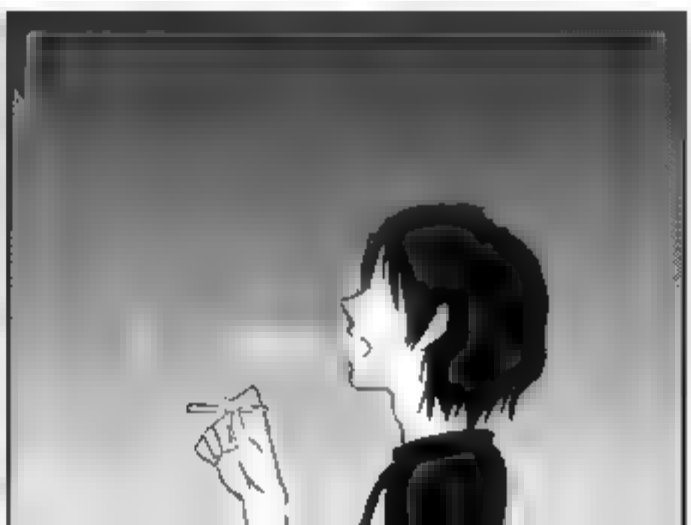
She sure does have a calming smell to her,

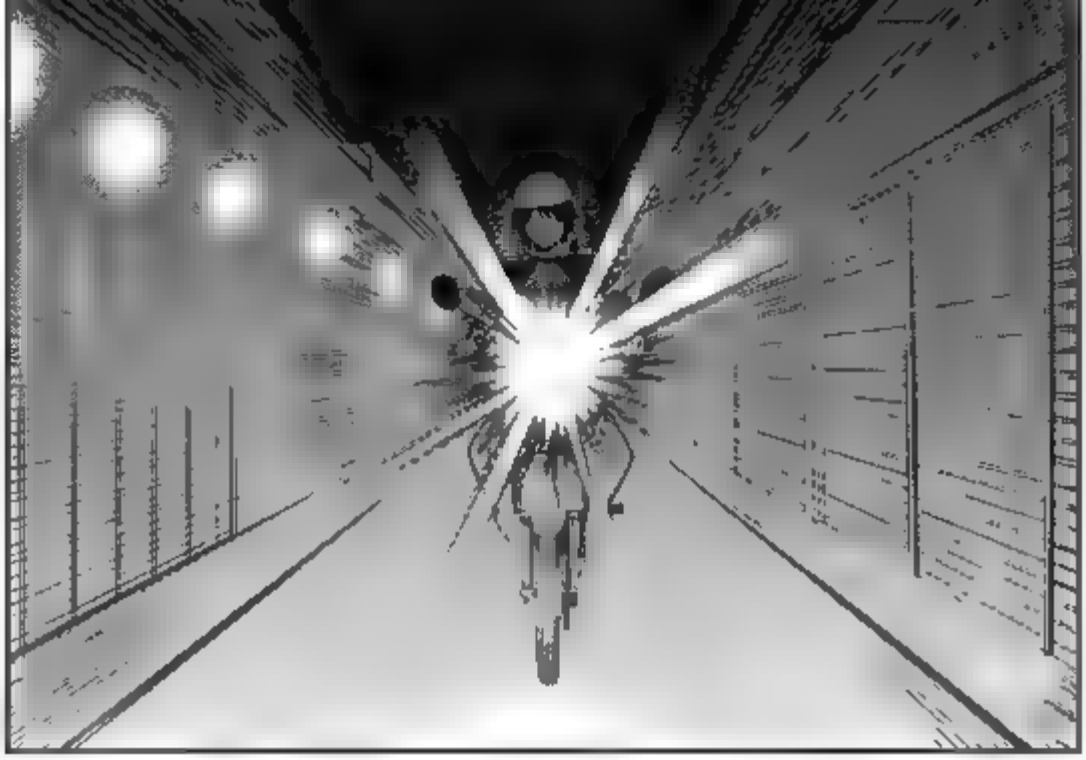
I thought.

Still nobody home...



Maybe tomor-row





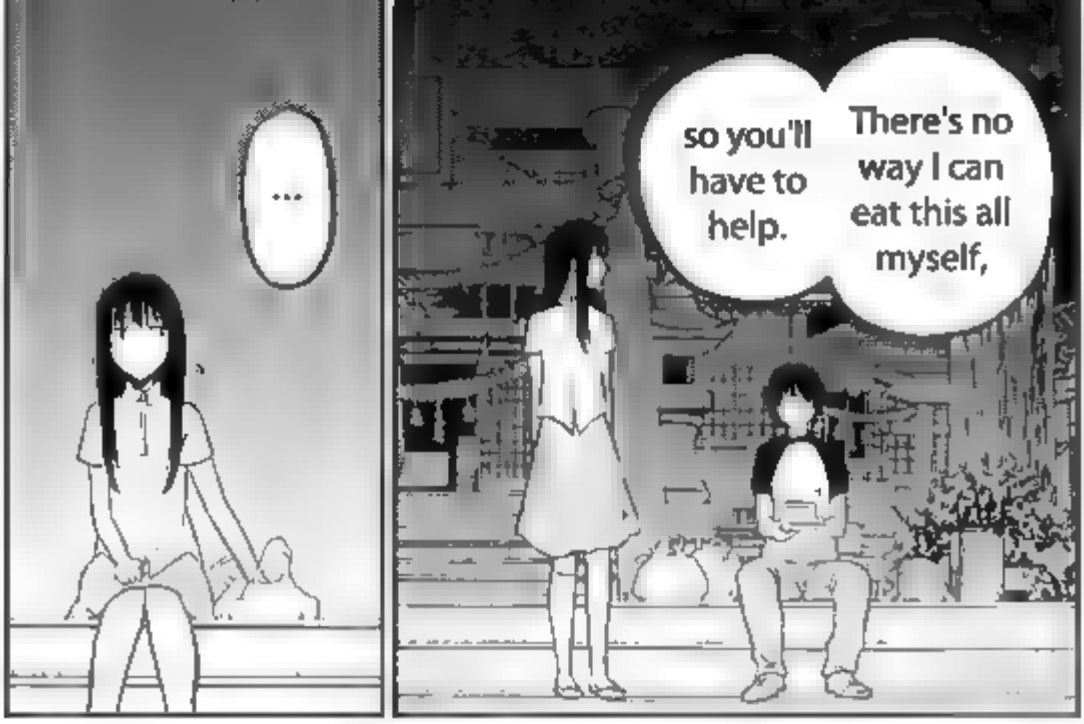
Are you going ...
to a festi-val?
The shrine past it
Want to drop by?

たこ焼
んご飴
やま

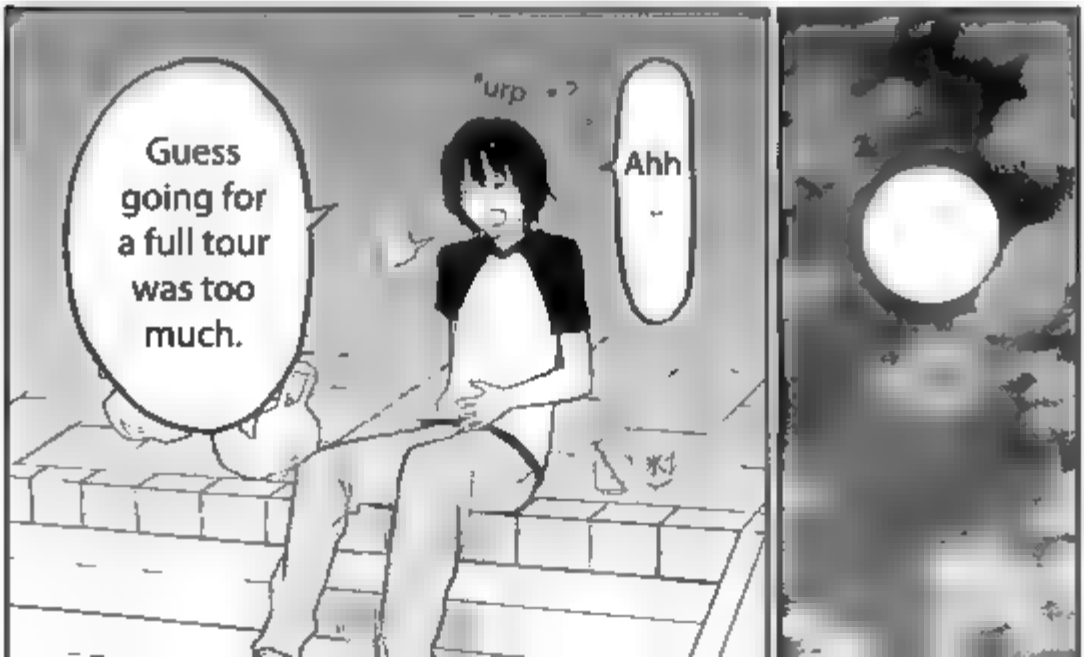
I hadn't seen such a festival in ten years.

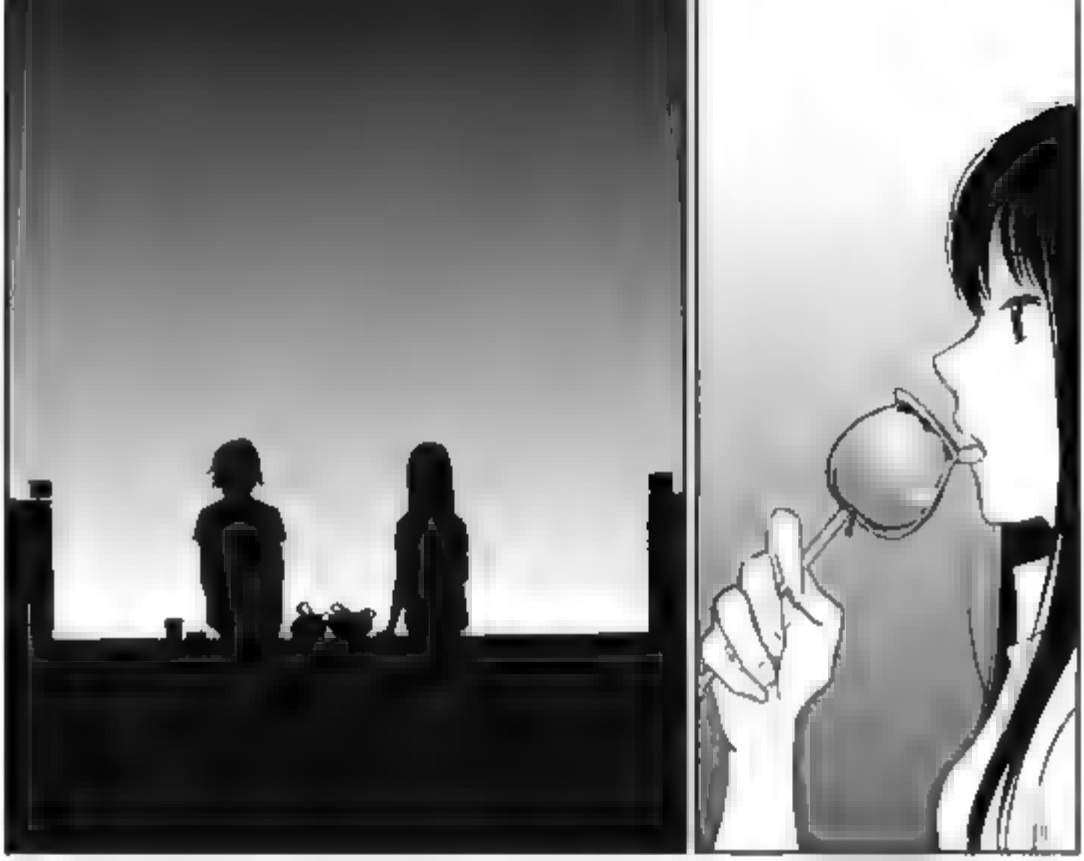
What are you buying all that for?
Dunno
I couldn't tell you myself.

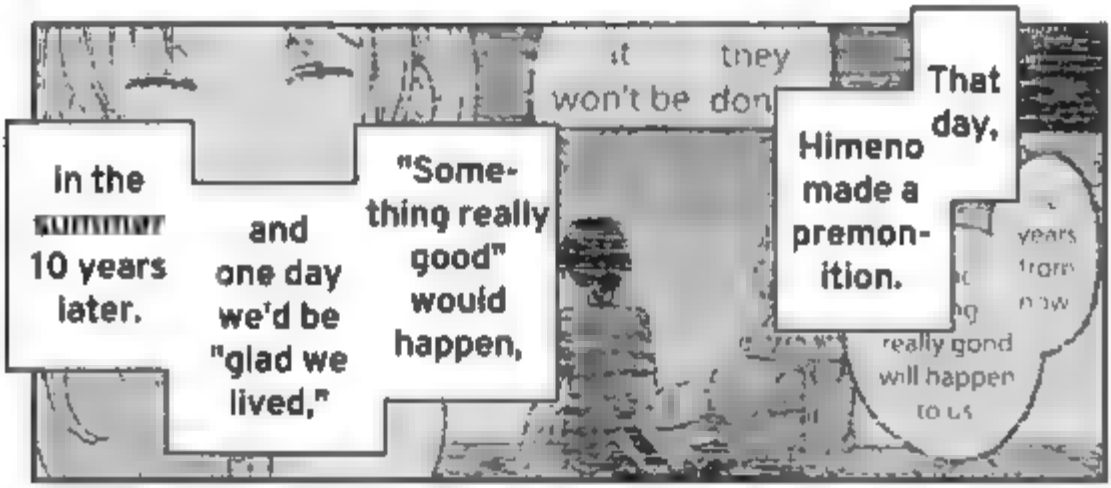
Ever since Himeno left,
I'd stopped going to the local one.
焼

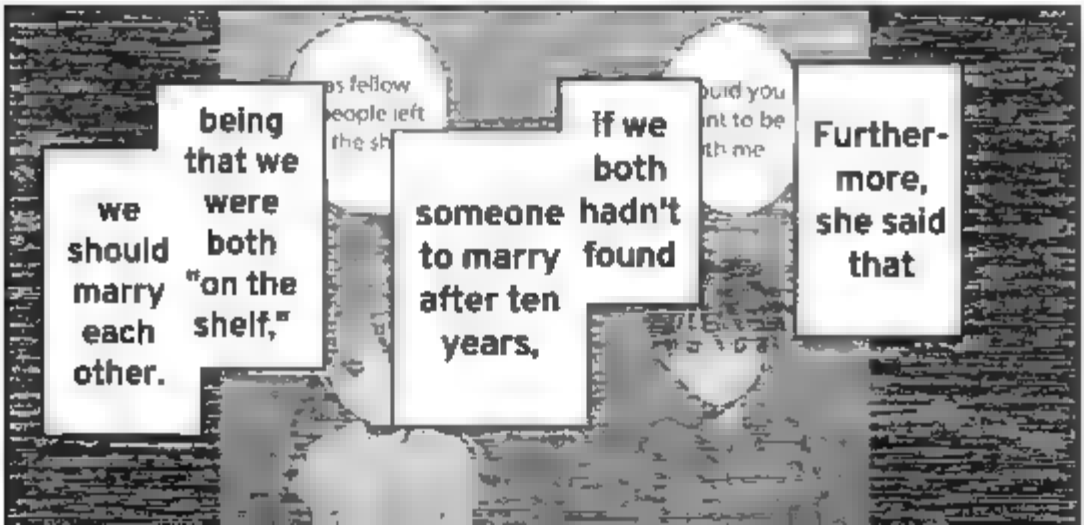

...
There's no way I can eat this all myself,
so you'll have to help.

I'll indulge.


urp
Ahh
Guess going for a full tour was too much.

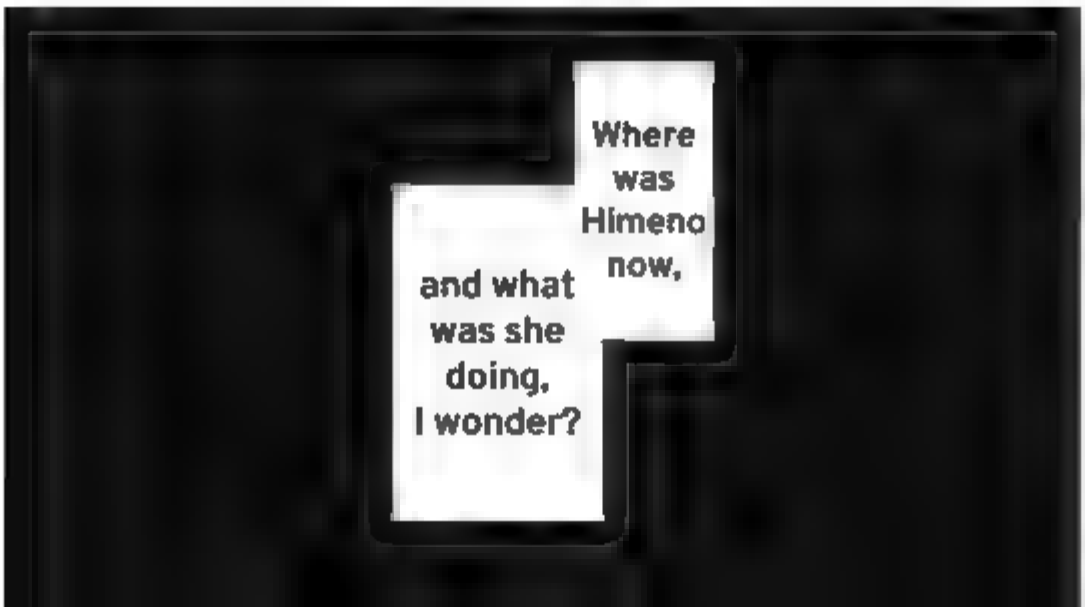



That day, Himeno made a premonition.
"Something really good" would happen,
and one day we'd be "glad we lived,"
in the 10 years later.

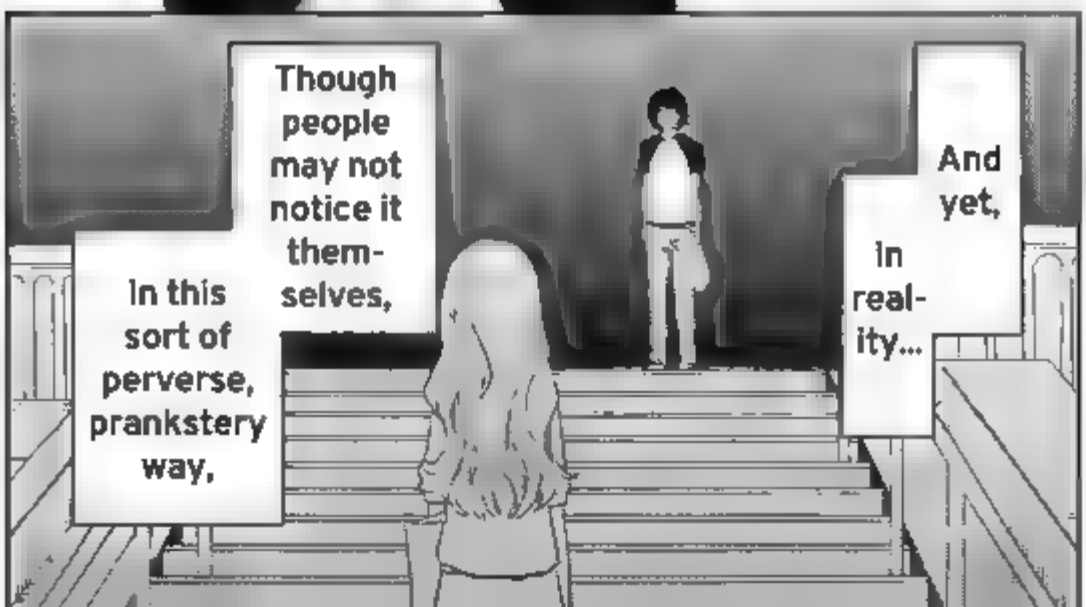

Furthermore, she said that
If we both hadn't found someone to marry after ten years,
being that we were both "on the shelf,"
we should marry each other.

I was in that summer.
Well, right now,

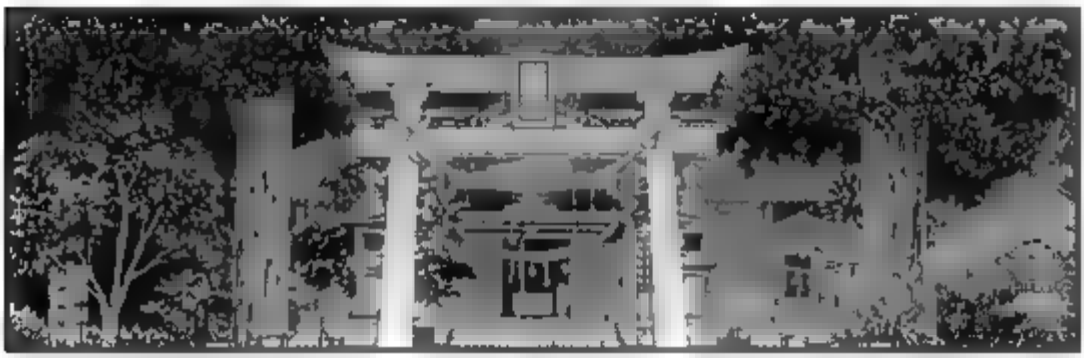
But all told,
neither of us had a satisfied customer to our names.
One of us had become used goods,
and the other was ending his life unfit to sell.


Where was Himeno now,
and what was she doing, I wonder?

Some things are too good to be true.
So people say.


Though people may not notice it themselves,
In this sort of perverse, prankstery way,
And yet,
in reality...

things
do come
together.



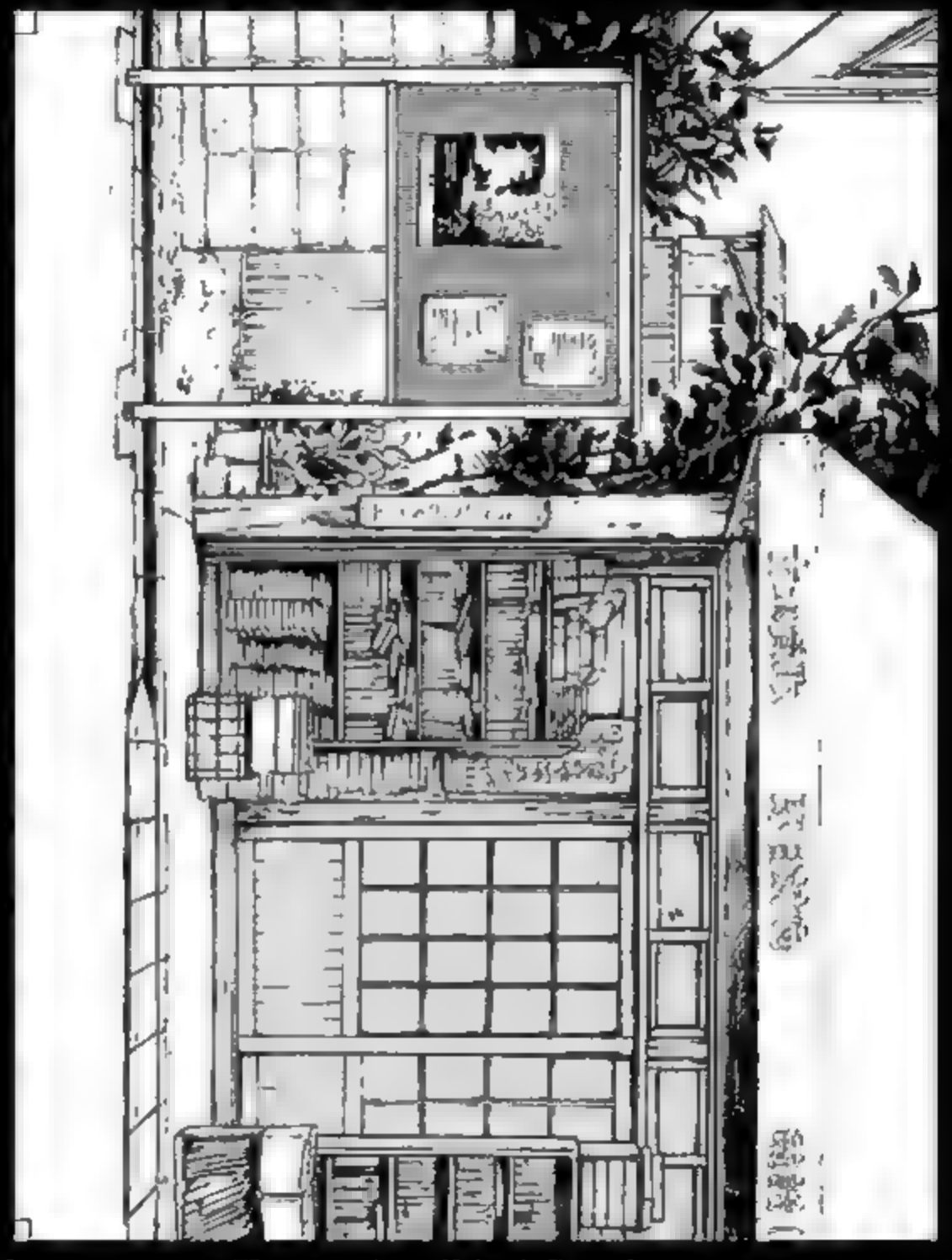
...

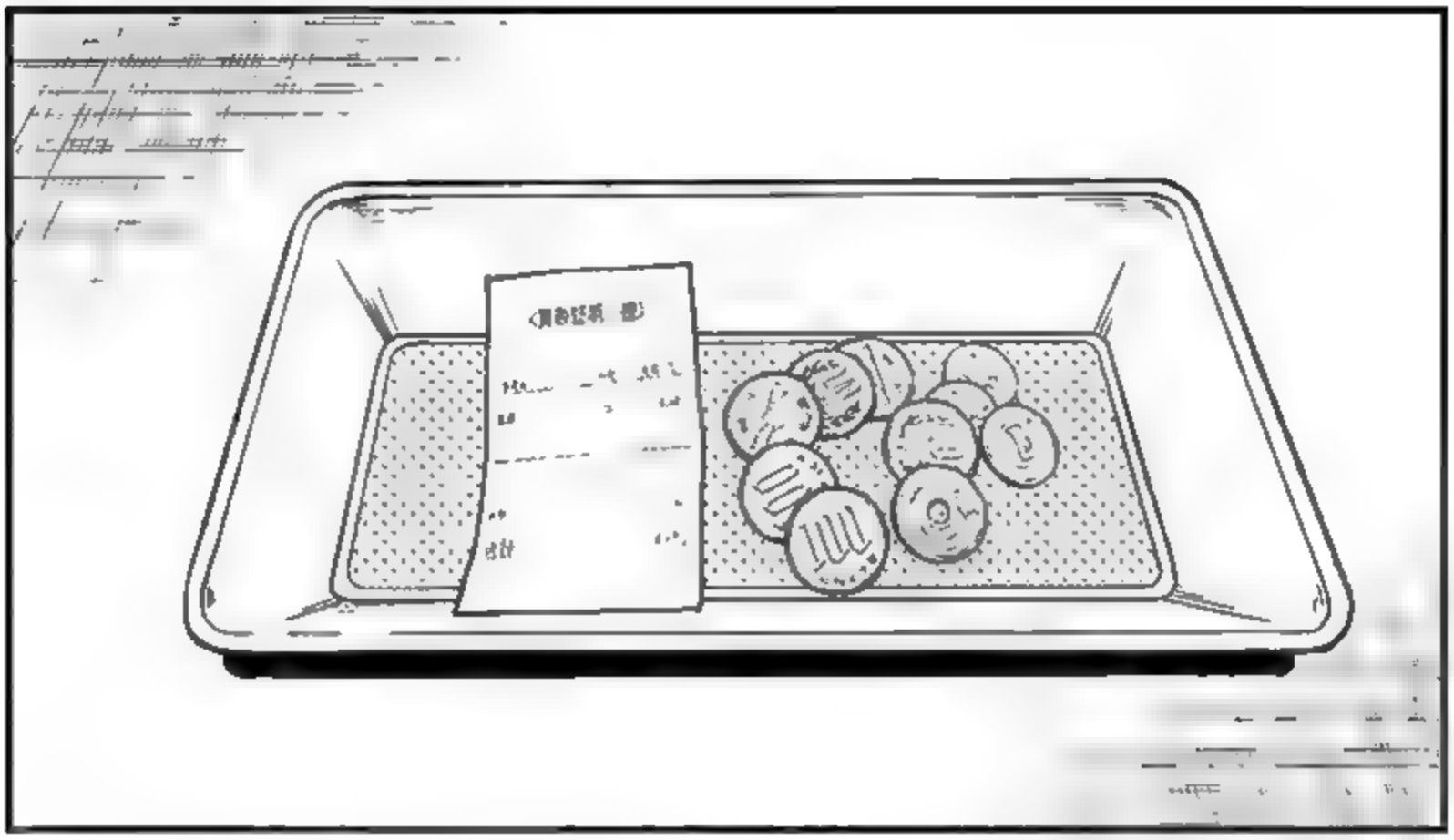
Himeno.

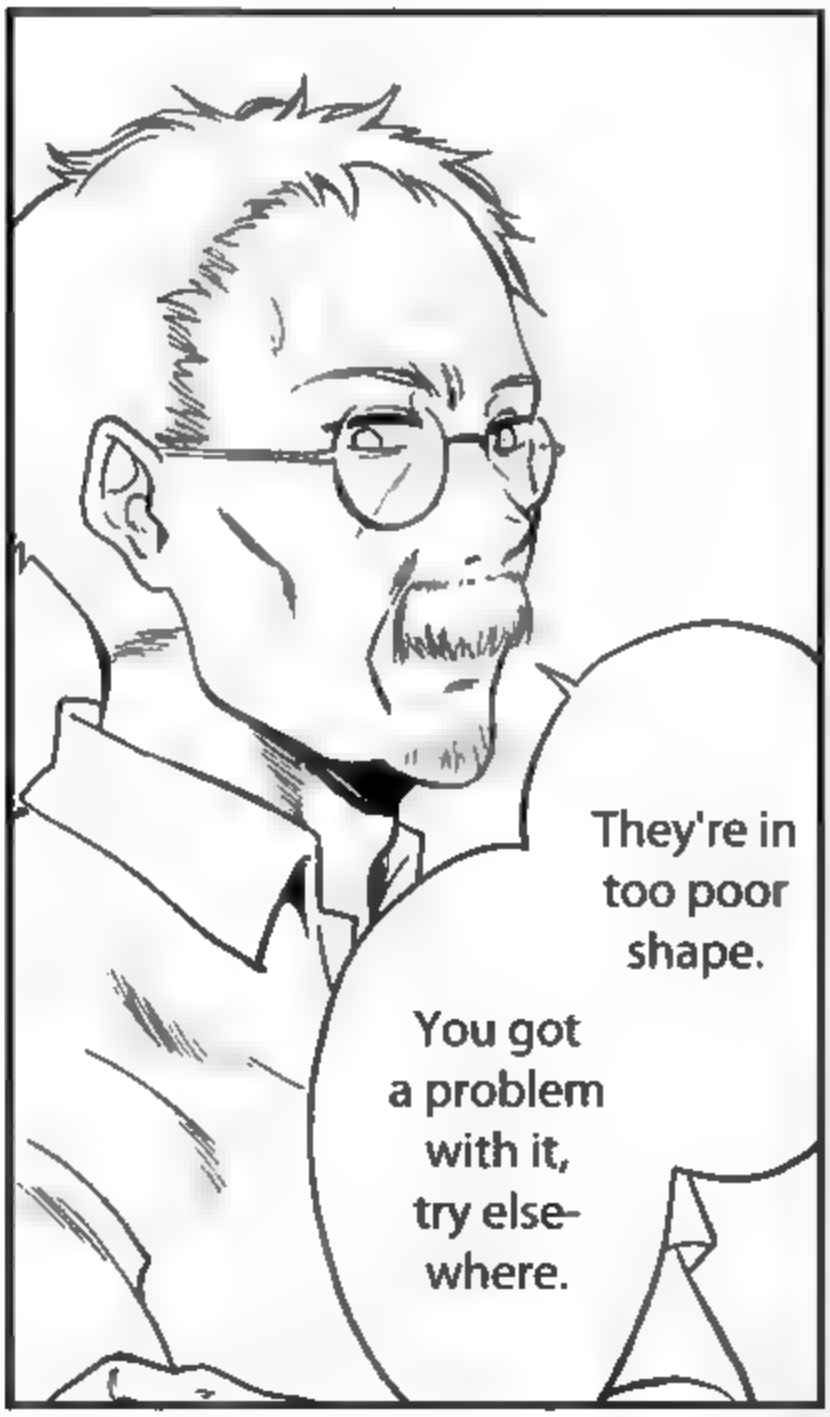
...Kusu-
noki?

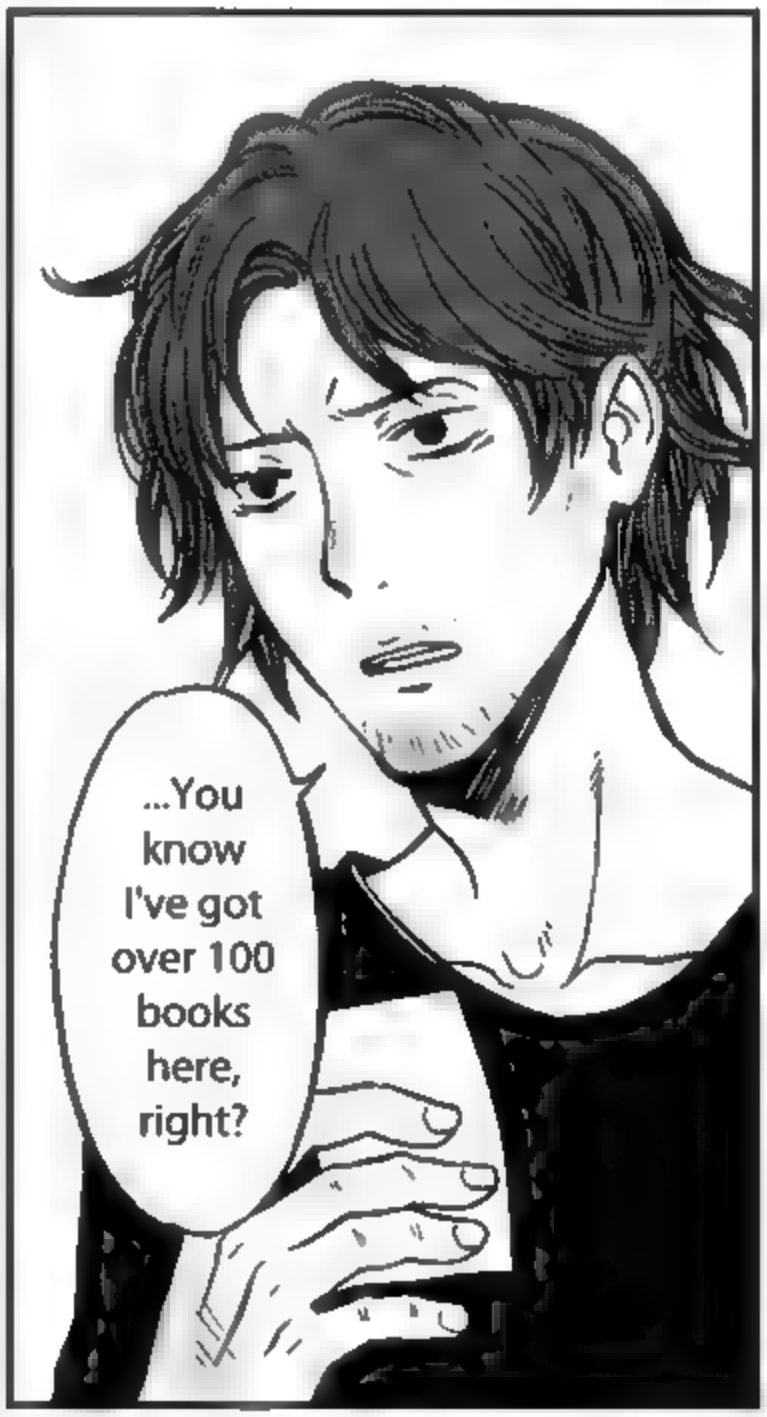
Extra Chapter

The Unspoken Lightness of Being






They're in too poor shape.
You got a problem with it, try else-where.


...You know I've got over 100 books here, right?

Let's have ice cream together!
tug
tug

Good plan.
Ehehe.

Yeah,
and you're no help.

You're strapped for cash, eh?

Hey.

Well then,
you wanna sell your lifespan?

Life-span?

...

Hmph.

The hell are you talkin' about?

Yeah, life-span.

Even just a year or two could fetch a decent price.

'Cause if you are,

I'd be happy to oblige right now.

Are you askin' me to try some kinda clinical trial?

No, I'm asking you a question:

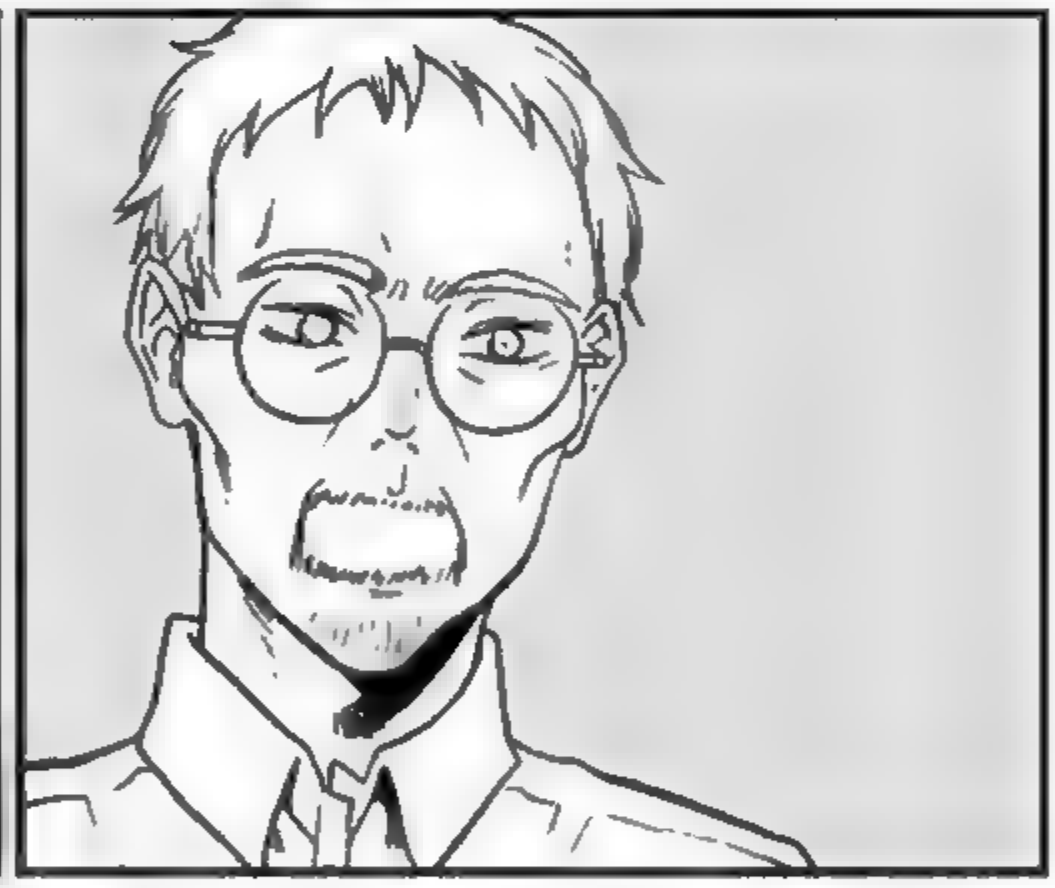
do you wanna sell your lifespan?

Sell my life-span?

What's that even mean?

Explain it in a way I can understand.

I don't get you.



but there's a facility nearby which can evaluate lifespan, and buys it in years.

It may not be easy to believe,

How about that?

Dream come true, right?

If the remainder of your life proves to be of value,

then just a few years of it

would let you live out the rest comfort-ably.

unfortunately, my life's pretty much worthless.

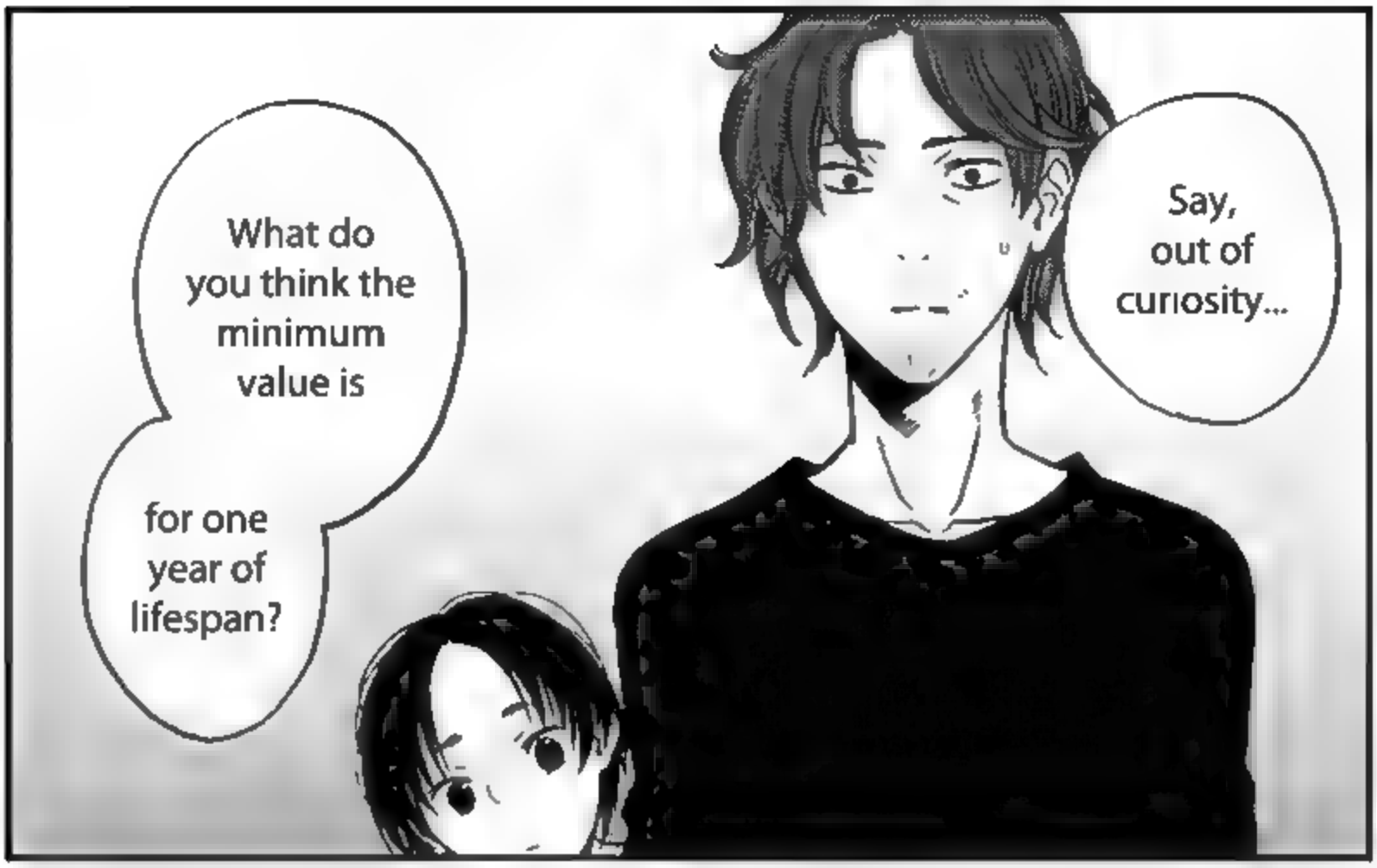
Yeah, sounds like a dream, alright.

...But,

The lowest price, eh...

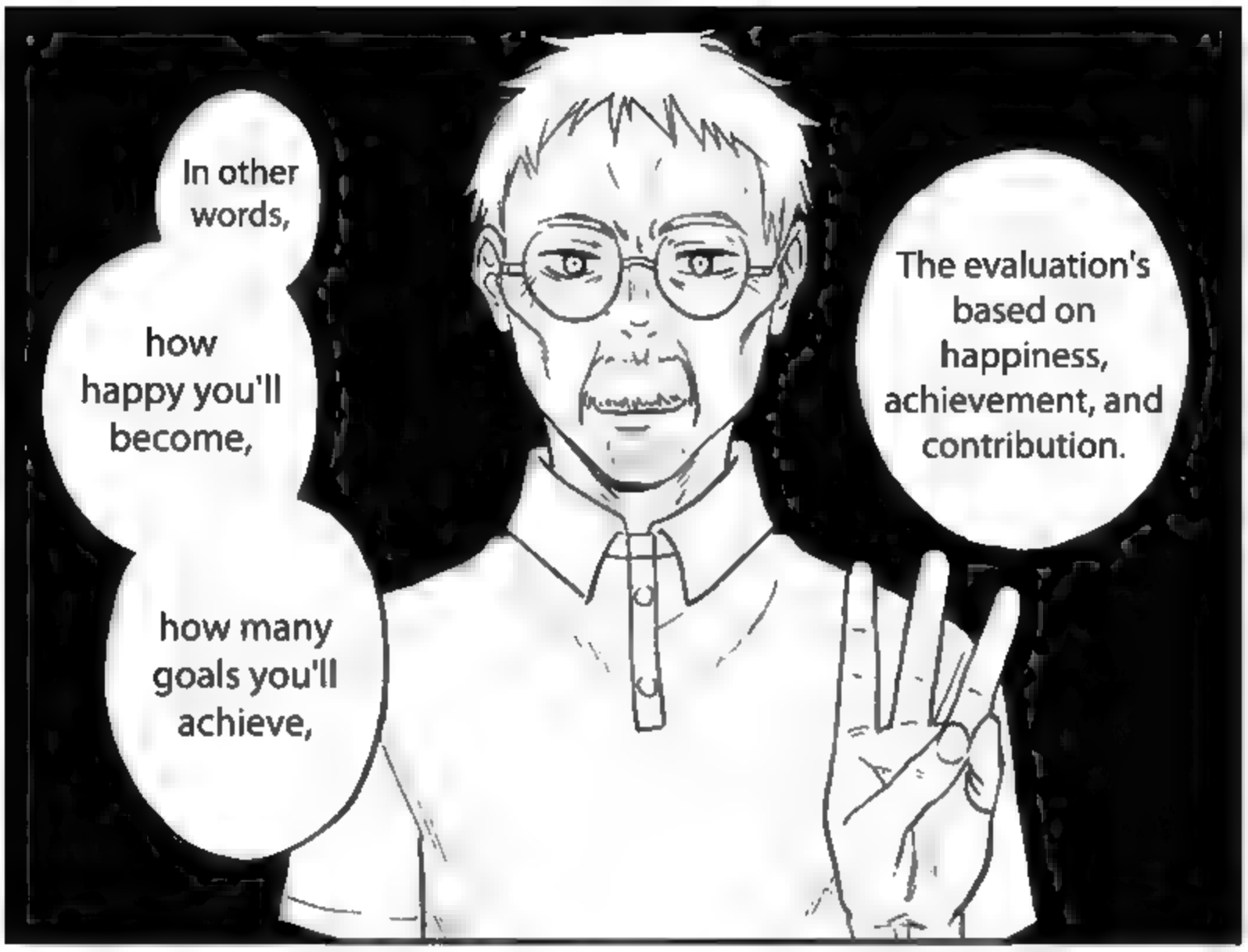
Just like most of these books I brought,

it'd just go for the lowest price.

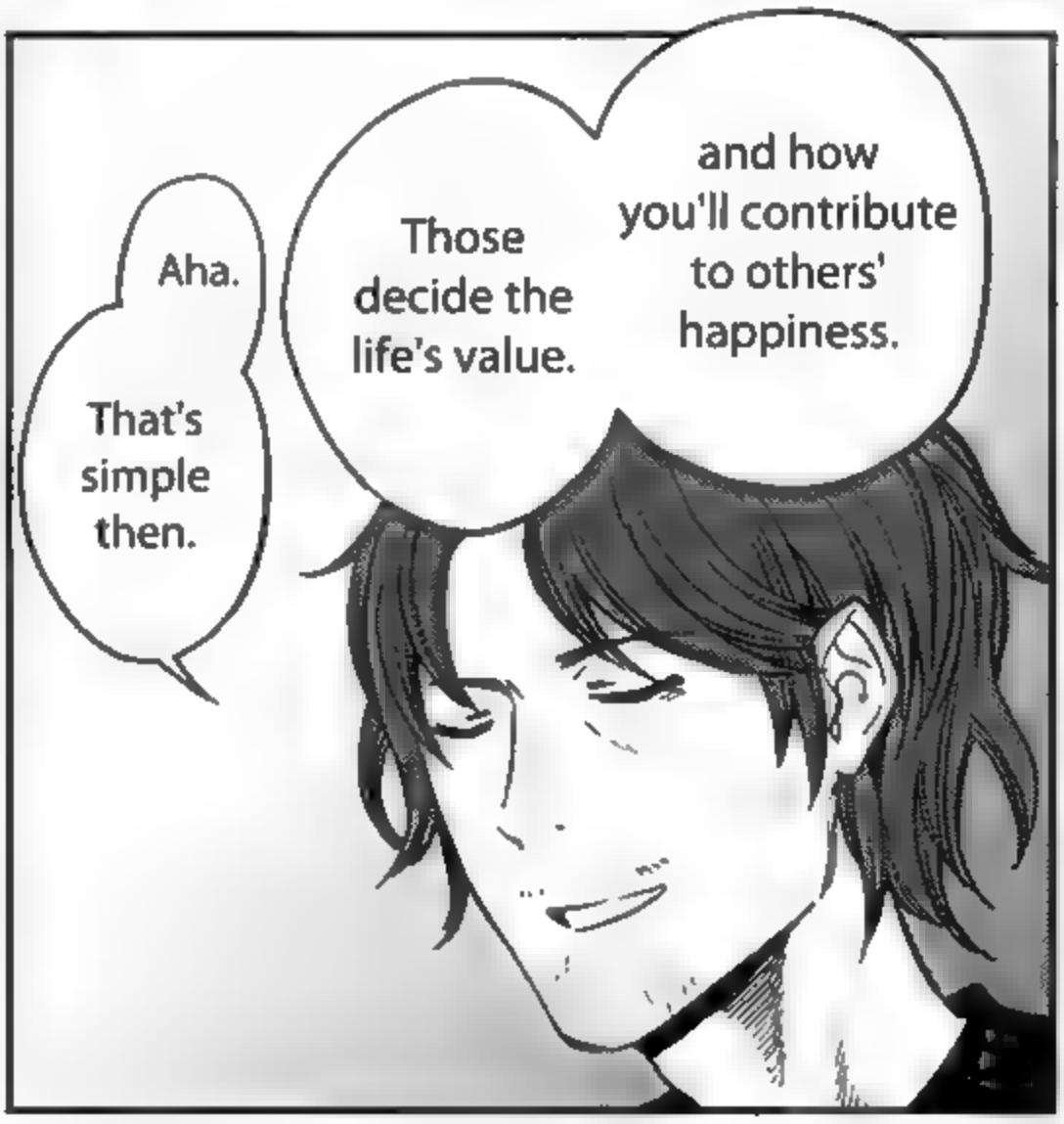

What do you think the minimum value is
for one year of lifespan?
Say, out of curiosity...

I'll buy all these books for 100 yen each.
If your answer's close enough,
Take a guess.

I'll give you a hint.
but I dunno how I'm supposed to know.
Okay, sure,
...


In other words,
how happy you'll become,
how many goals you'll achieve,
The evaluation's based on happiness, achievement, and contribution.

Yeah?
So how much?


Aha.
That's simple then.
Those decide the life's value.
and how you'll contribute to others' happiness.

Not worthy of a price.

Zero.

ガタッ
rattle

...

How'd you figure it was zero?

swoop

Right, basically...

Let's try rephrasing your question.

...

Well, how should I say this?

simply put...

can't realize a single dream -

If you can't make yourself happy,

can't make others happy,

...Go on.

if you're *someone like me,*

how would that life be priced?

Comes to the same thing, right?

I thought back through these 32 years of life,

and I've never felt any happiness that felt like happiness.

Had a bunch of dreams,

but never achieved a single one.

And forget ever making other people happy -

I actively stole their happiness away.

Stole?

Yeah.

By the most optimistic measure,
I'd say I've ruined at least 20 people's lives.
I've had to give it up now for a couple reasons,
but 'til recently, I was sort of a con man.

But if I was buying,
and it was a guy like me's lifespan,
I wouldn't wanna offer a single yen for it.
That said,
I had to do it just to survive.
Don't regret it at all.

...
I see.
...

Do you wanna sell your lifespan?

Well, I'll ask you again now.

Who out there would sell something for nothin'?

Gramps, were you even listening to a word I said?

I'm sure you could live comfortably on that money.

Just selling five years or so,

Oh yeah? On what basis are you so sure?

sigh

As far as I can see,

I think your lifespan'd sell pretty well.

In the eyes of most people,

they might think you're not only worthless,

but that it'd be better if you never even existed.

Certainly,

if we're talking about the past,

you might be human garbage not worth a single yen.

So the past's got no bearing on that.

It's the future what decides it.

Thing is,

your lifespan's value is your *remaining* life's value.

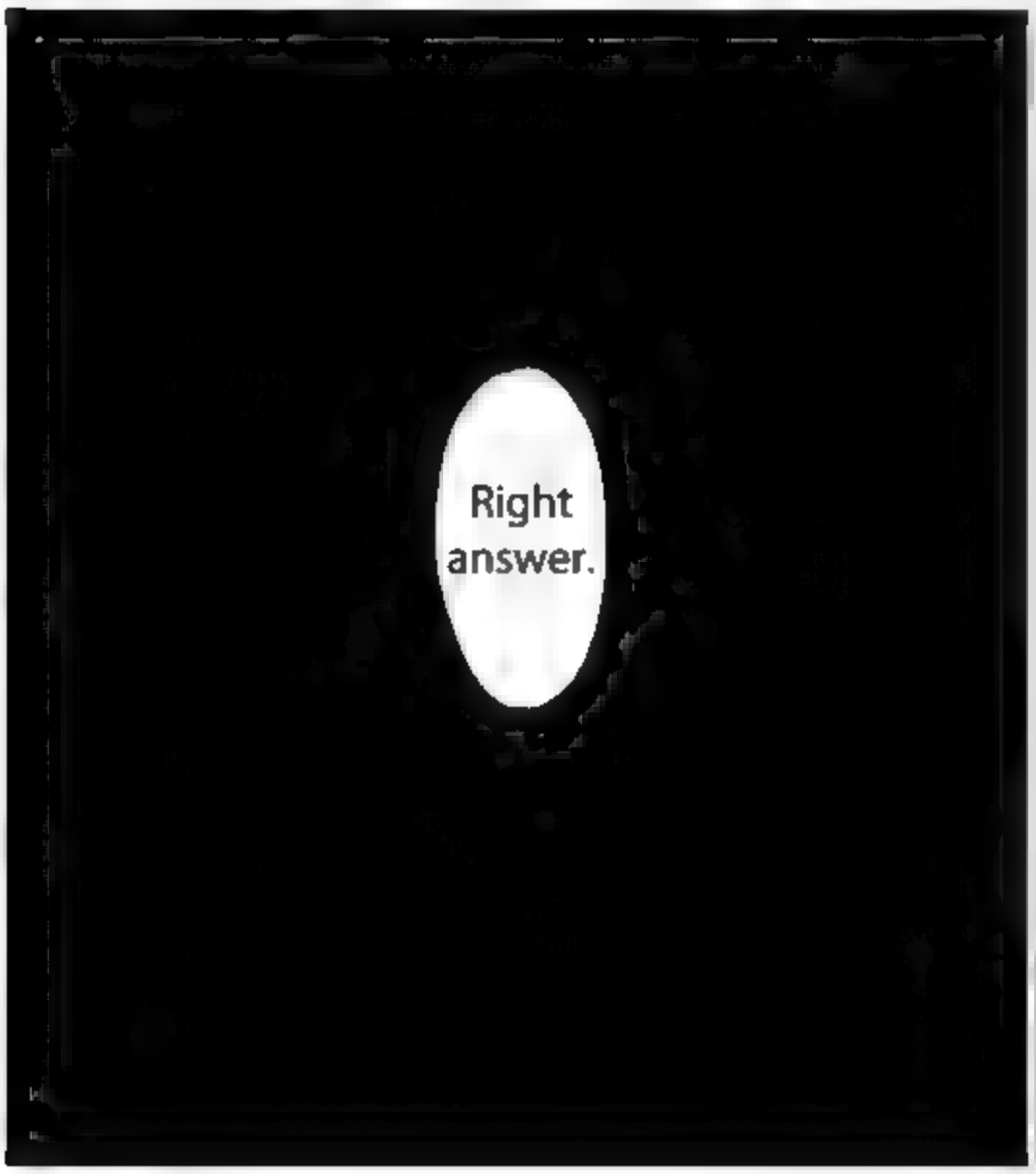
Do you see me as having a bright future ahead?

But still, gramps ...

Okay, I get how the past doesn't affect the value of lifespan.

... Yeah.

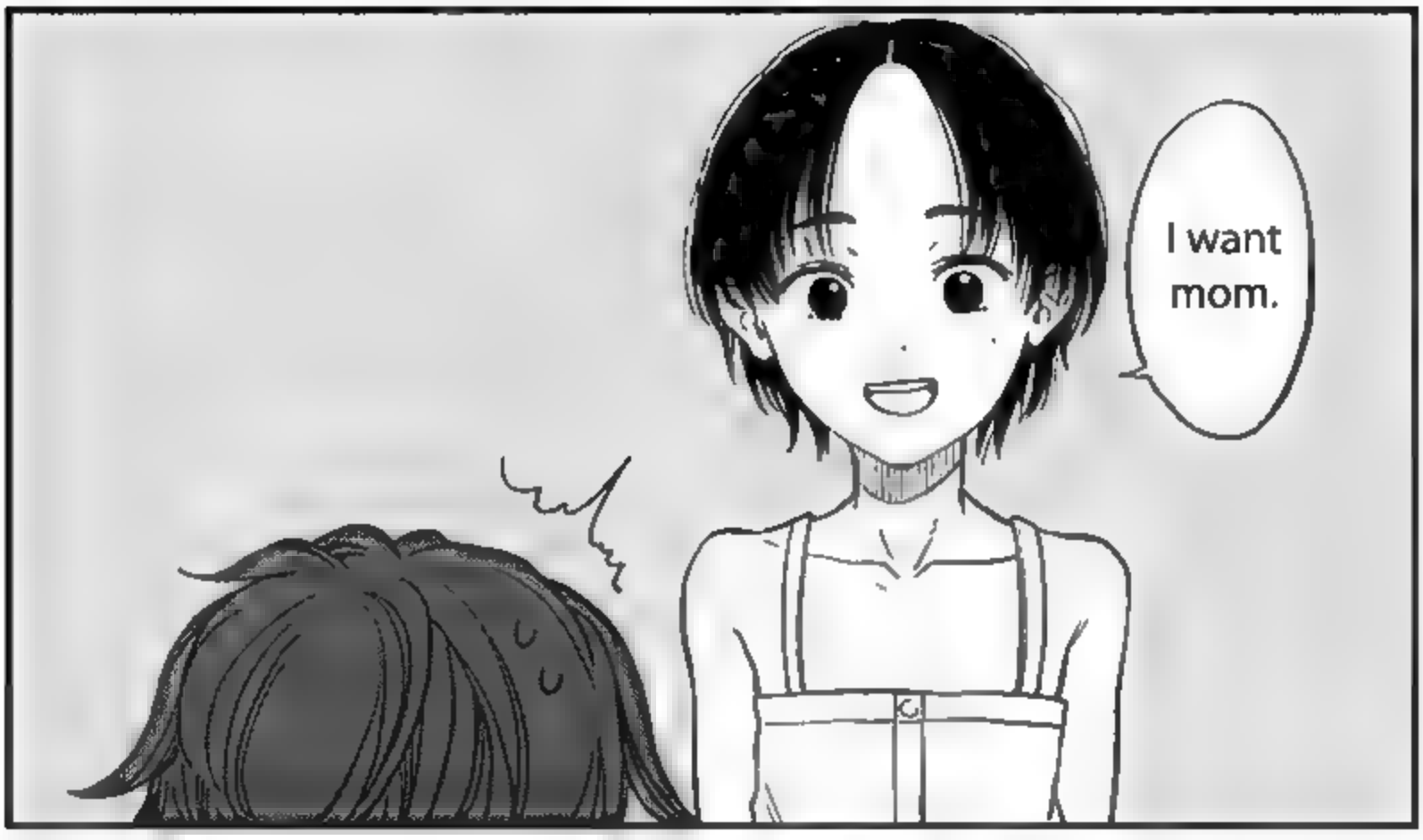
No logic in letting those years go
if they're worth that much.
all the more reason not to sell.
Well,


Right answer.

...

Anything you want 'sides ice cream?
Ask now, and I'll buy you anything.

got some unexpected temporary income.
Okay,

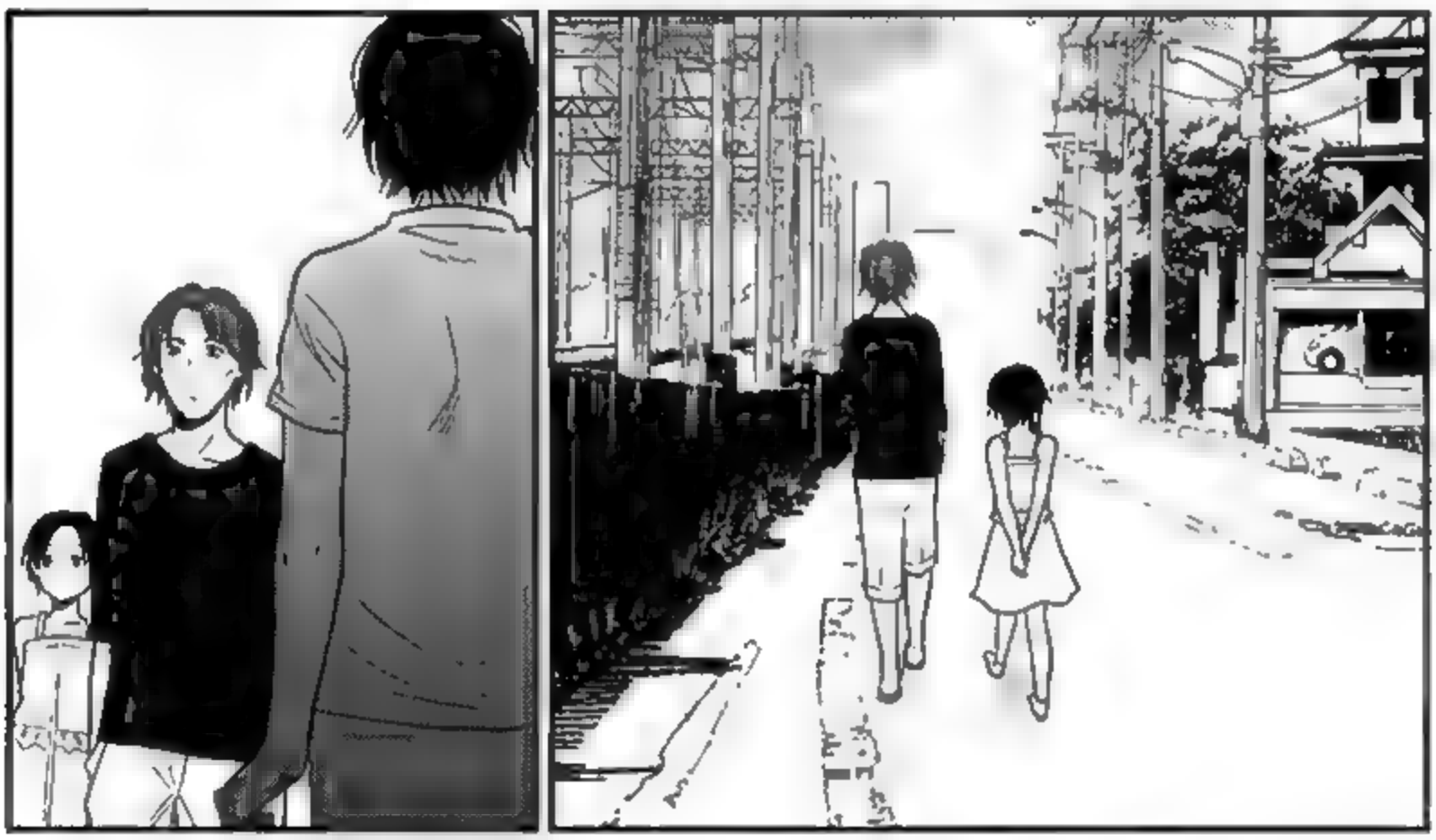

I want mom.

I was just kidding!
And within 10,000 yen...
But I'd appreciate something purchasable right now...
I'll keep looking into it with an open mind!

No... I'm good.
I'm thinking I'll try to quit while I'm at it.
Hmm?

There's not really much I want.
You haven't smoked in a while, right, mister?
Want cigarettes?

You neither.
Don't push yourself too hard, okay?



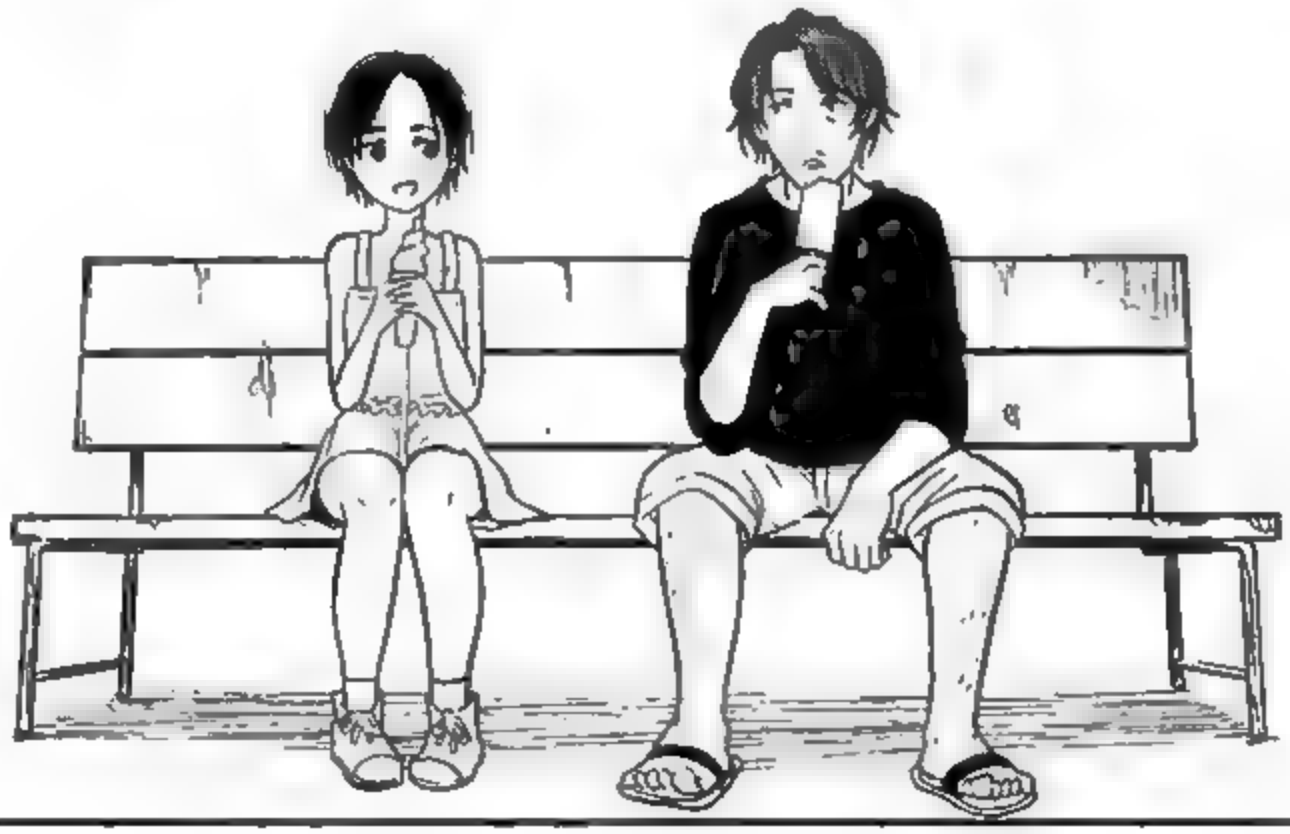
Hey, mister, I think your lifespan would sell for a lot too.

I think I'd pick you.

if you asked me to choose between 3 billion yen or getting to stay with you,

I mean,

Why do you think that?



...You're bad at hiding when you're embarrassed, mister.

...You're good at lifting my spirits, Hazuki.

With that smile,

I felt just a little bit more willing to believe that old man's words.

寿命を買い取ってもらった。二年につき、二万円で。

I Sold Off My Lifespan, For 10,000 Yen A Year.

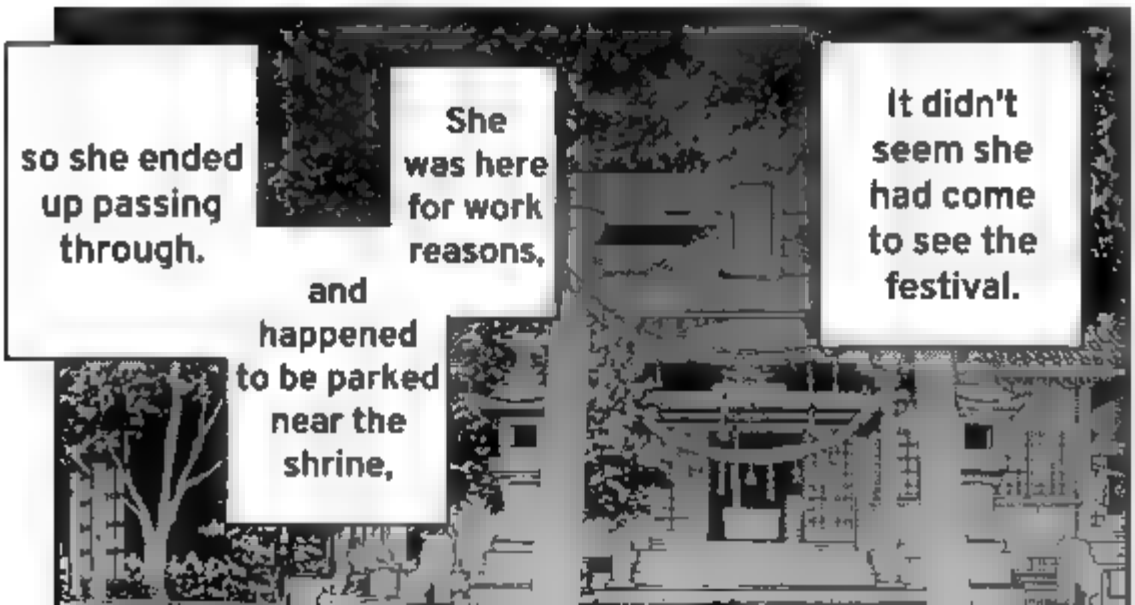
Chapter 8

Original: Sugaru Miaki Manga: Shoichi Taguchi
("Three Days of Happiness" from Media Works Bunko)
Character Design: E9L / Shoichi Taguchi

After Himeno and I re-united,
I can barely remem-ber
what we actually talked about.

That's just how excited I was.
I was probably talking without thinking.

But it didn't matter what the conversation was.
For me to say something and Himeno to respond, that was all I needed.

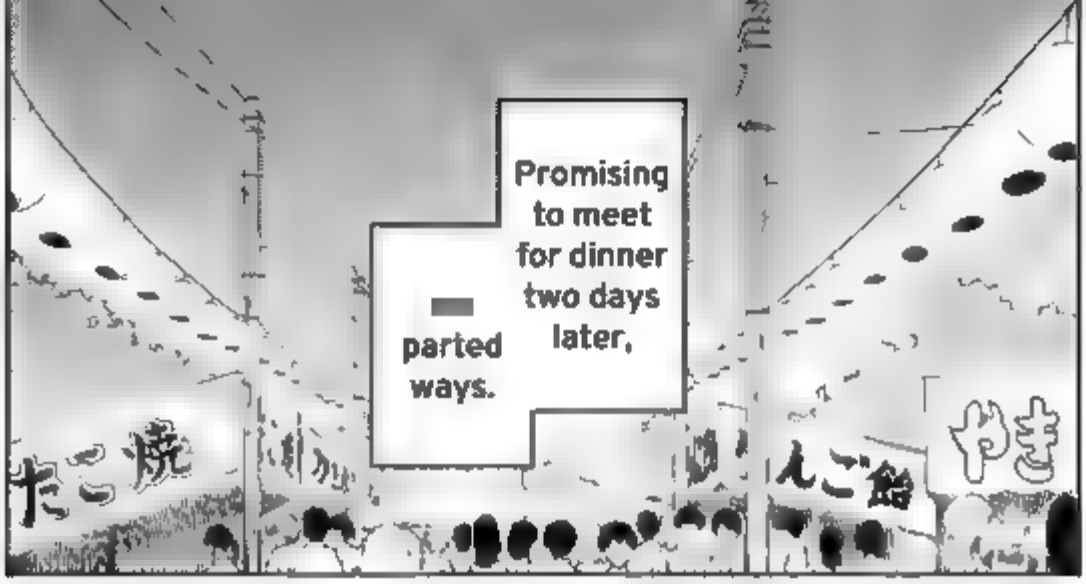

It didn't seem she had come to see the festival.
She was here for work reasons, and happened to be parked near the shrine,
so she ended up passing through.

I'd love to talk a little longer,
but I have to get up early.

Alcohol's no good,
but a meal. .

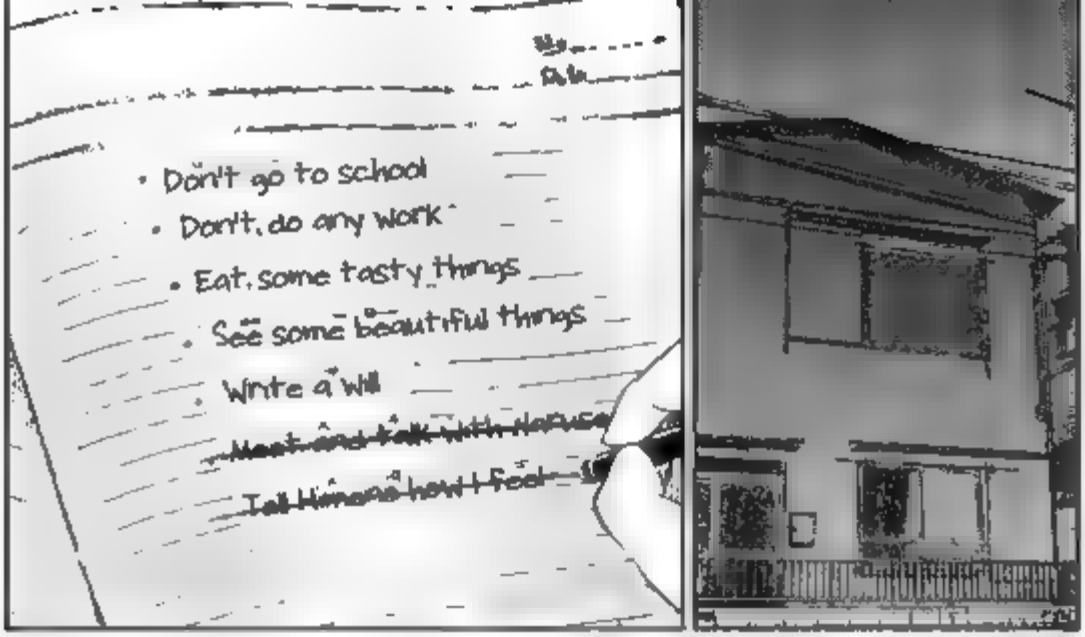
Hmm
Wanna go for a drink sometime soon?
Oh, okay ...

Sure thing.


Promising to meet for dinner two days later,
parted ways.

Well, that was nice.
I hadn't expected things would go like that, myself.

I suppose sometimes, it is true.
Yes...
You know?
Just seems too good to be true.
Me neither.


• Don't go to school
• Don't do any work
• Eat some tasty things
• See some beautiful things
• Write a will
~~• Meet and talk with Haruka~~
~~• Tell Himeno how I feel~~

I've got
kind of a strange request for you.

I don't drink.
It's not that.
Tomorrow, I want you to help prepare me for Himeno.
Prepare you? In what way?

In twenty years,
I've never really interacted with a girl, ever.
I know it'd be pointless to hide anything from you now, so I'm gonna be honest.

To hopefully cut down on that,
I want to go to town tomorrow and re-hearse
So if I just went into this Himeno thing,
I know I'd probably bore her and mess up a lot.

you want me to play the part of Ms Himeno?
...If I'm not mistaken...
You're saying

but in practice, I imagine there would be issues...
Well, I don't much mind,
That's right. Will you accept?

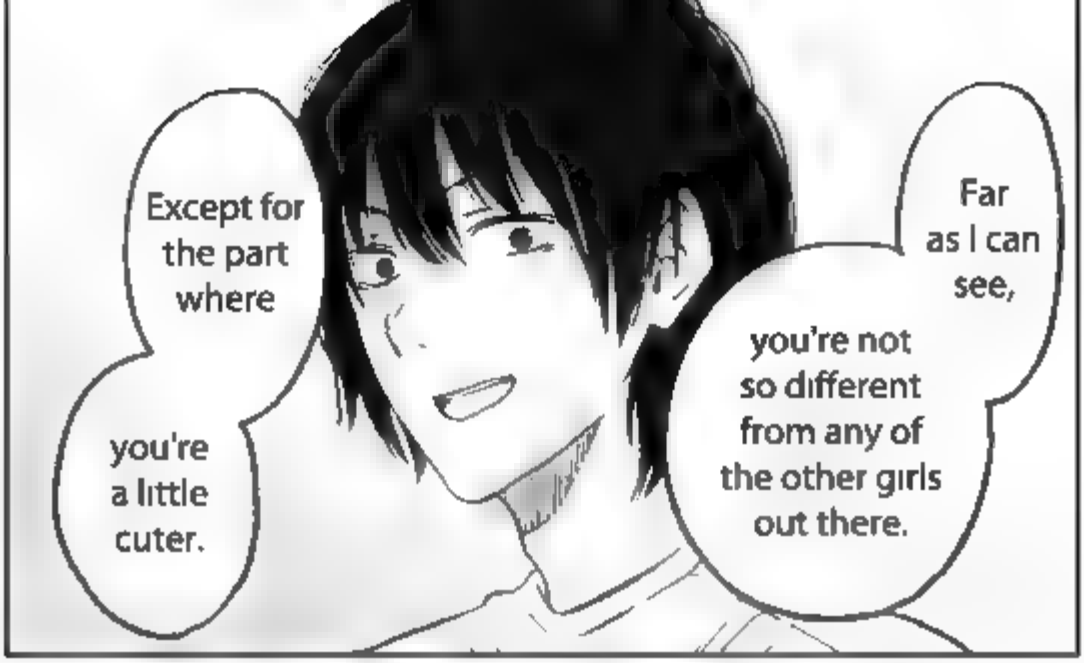
Not a prob-lem. Why should I care what people think?
Yes, that.
Oh, you mean how I'm the only one who can see you?

as long as Himeno likes me just a little, I'm satisfied with that.
Even if every-body else ridicules me,
All that mat-ters is simply that Himeno thinks well of me.

When it comes to Ms. Himeno,
you really become like a different person,
don't you.

As you should know,
I know very little about how women in my generation think.
I may be an inadequate subsitute...
It's no problem.

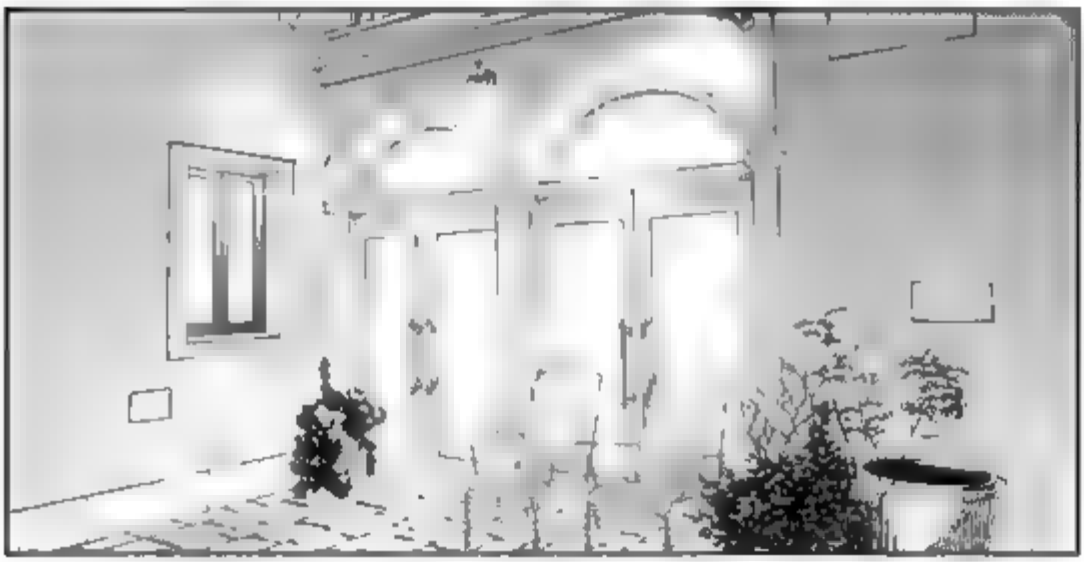
But..
Are you certain about this?


Except for the part where
you're a little cuter.
Far as I can see,
you're not so different from any of the other girls out there.

if it's no problem to you,
then very well.
... Well,

swsh
As long as it comes off as clean, that should be enough.
you have to wear anything too fancy.
I don't believe
You're free to interpret it however you want.
Can I interpret that as "you'd look good in anything"?

No need to air your every thought.
Seems to me it's a compliment.
Got it.
I'll interpret it as I want.



I'm meeting someone important.
Tom-orrow.

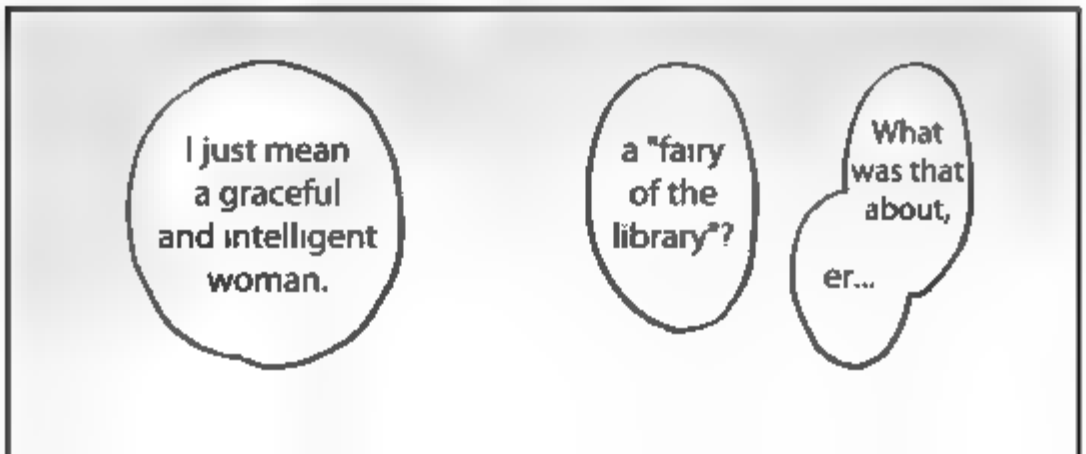
and the beautician passionately cut my hair,
giving me a number of tips for my big day.
I did as Miyagi advised,

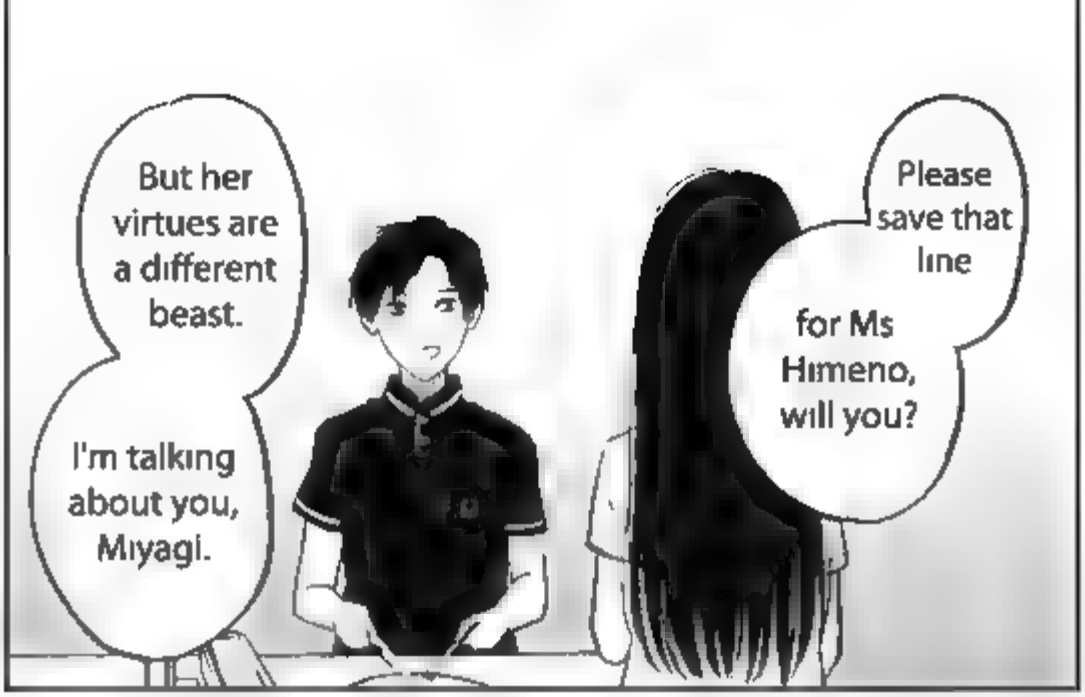
you're almost like an entirely different person from yesterday.
Why,

In-deed.
I sure don't look like a guy whose life is only worth 10,000 yen a year, huh?
Yeah.

Thank you.
you look like a fairy of the library.
And when you smile, Miyagi,
you're someone with the promise of a happy future.
You look as if

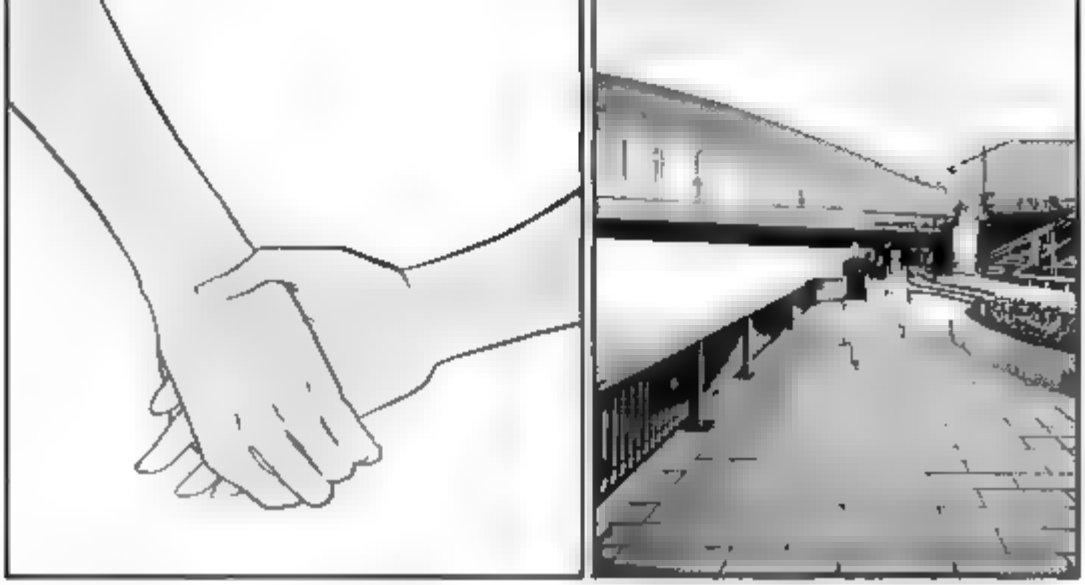
Seems I am.
...
You're rather chipper today, Mr. Kusunoki.

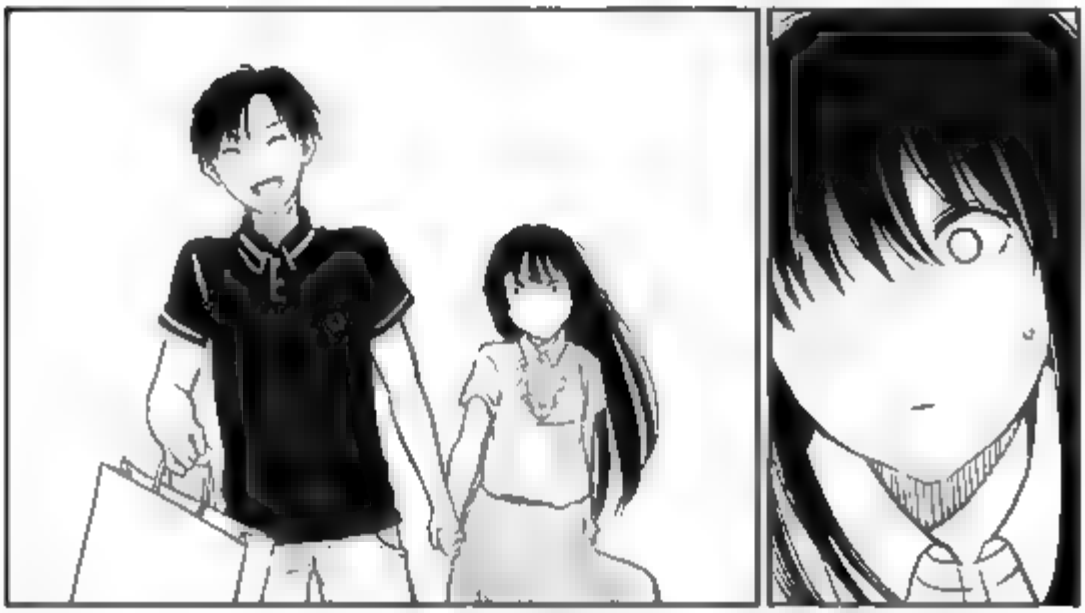

I just mean a graceful and intelligent woman.
a "fairy of the library"?
What was that about, er...

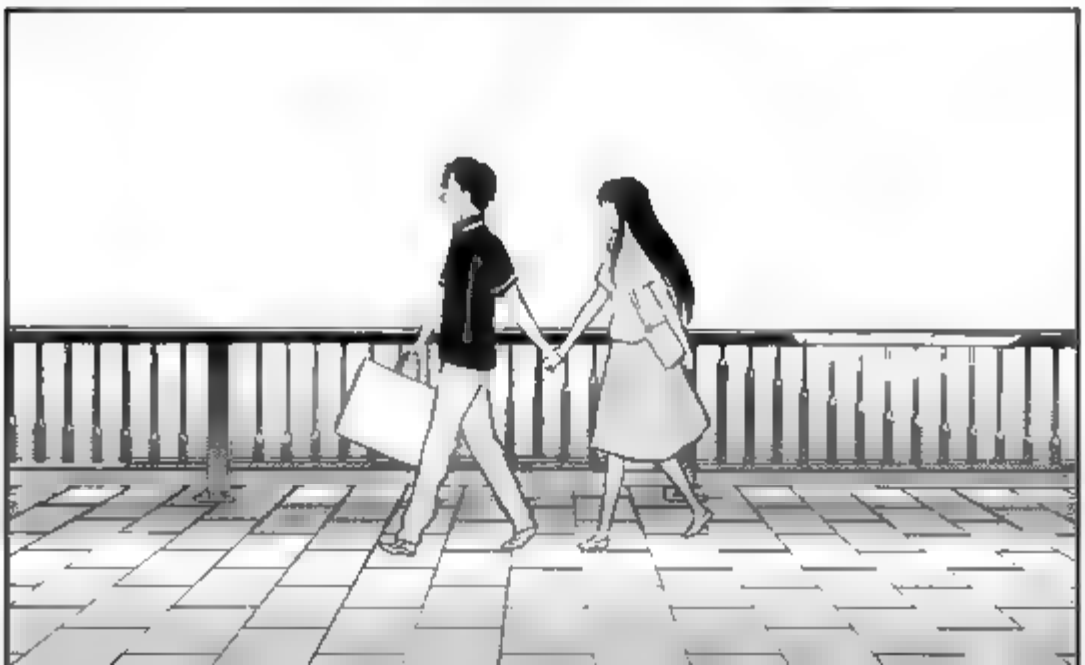

But her virtues are a different beast.
I'm talking about you, Miyagi.
Please save that line for Ms Himeno, will you?

...Well, thank you.

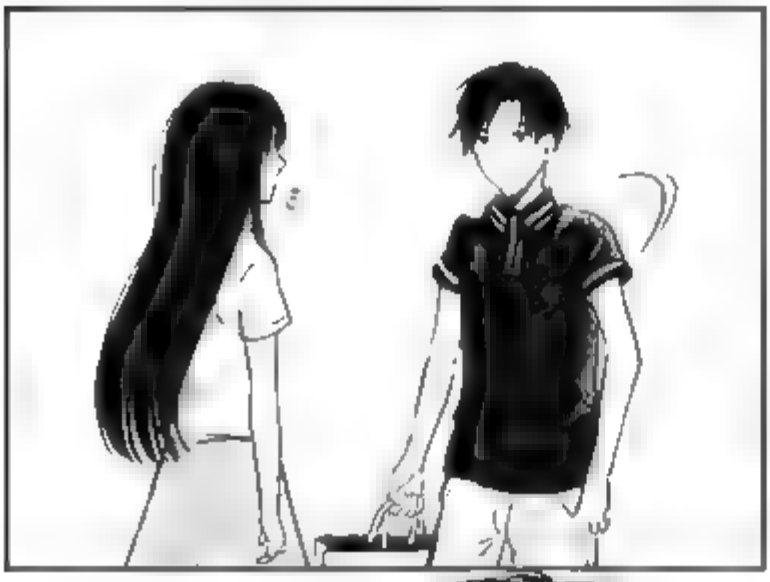
Pretty strange, huh.
Of course, in reality, both you and I are worth next to nothing as people.







Try to think of me as Himeno and seduce me,
Mr. Drunk Kusunoki.
All right.



Right.

And when you left my sight,
that was the worst thing to ever happen.
You appearing before me was
the best thing that's ever happened in my life.

And now,
depending on your reply,
I might have a new best or worst.

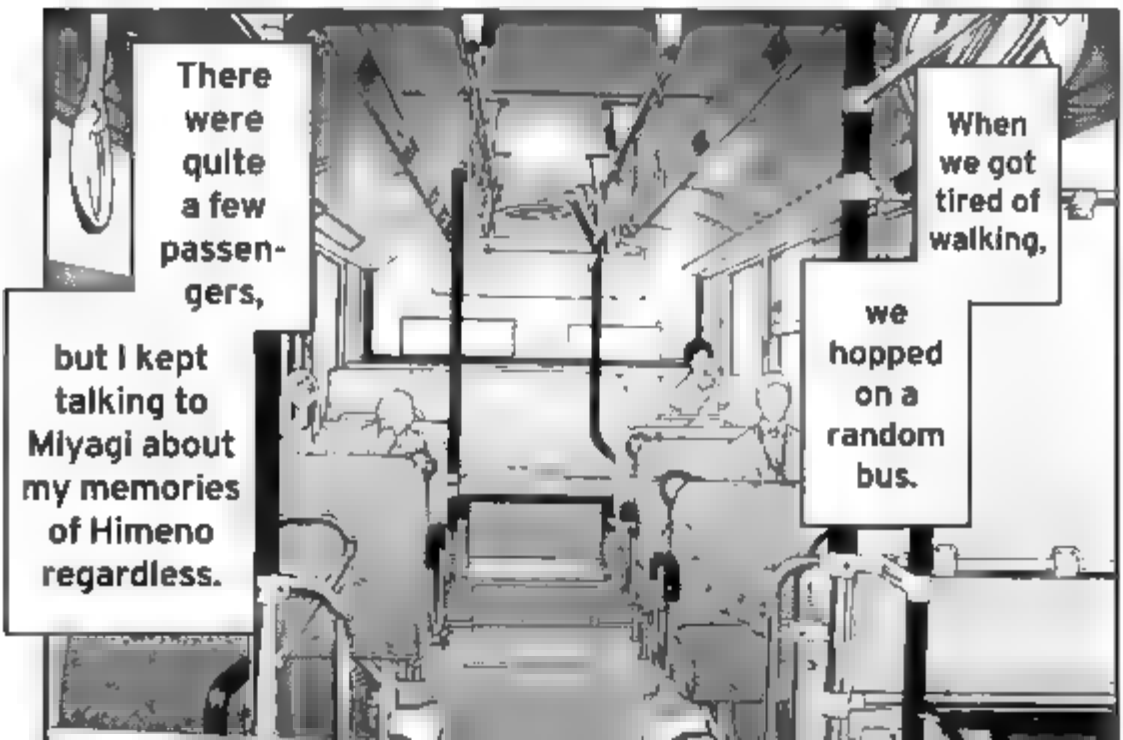
That was...
a pretty smooth delivery for such a roundabout pickup line.
I'm impr-essed.

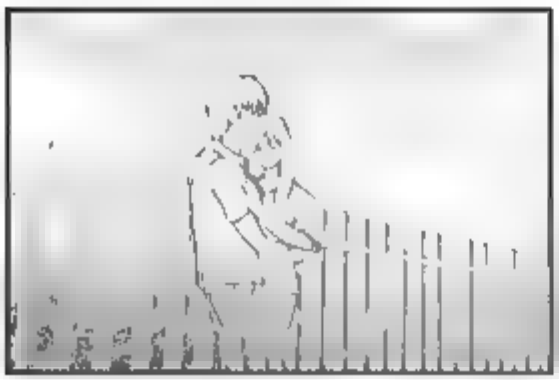
So then
how do you think Himeno would reply?
Ah, well, if it were Ms Himeno...

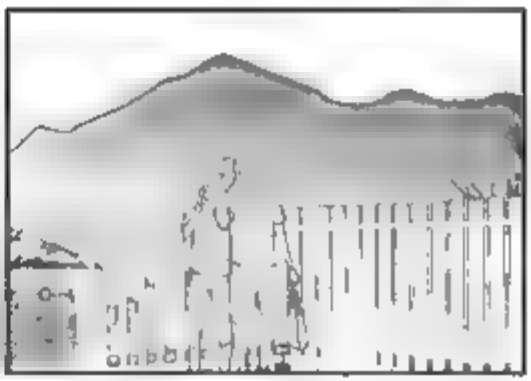
Huh.
What if it were Miyagi?
"What's this nonsense all of a sudden?"
she might say,
and try to laugh it off.
Don't worry about it.
Joking.
...I don't catch your meaning.
The kind to joke.
Mr. Kusunoki, are you truly that kind of person?

I'm not sure myself
I don't put much trust in words like "personality" or "disposition" or "character."
Those things all change depending on the situation
In the long run, what differs from person to person is what situations they're likely to end up in.
People put a lot of faith in consistency,
but it might be more superficial than most people think.
I wouldn't have expected you of all people to say something like that.
When there's a depressing statistic, everyone likes to think they're the exception.

I suppose that is true.


There were quite a few passen-gers,
but I kept talking to Miyagi about my memories of Himeno regardless.
When we got tired of walking,
we hopped on a random bus.





Himeno was with me too.
The very first time I came here,

That railing up there,
at the top of the spiral stairs,
is just the right height for a kid to want to get on top of.
So even Himeno tried to climb up...

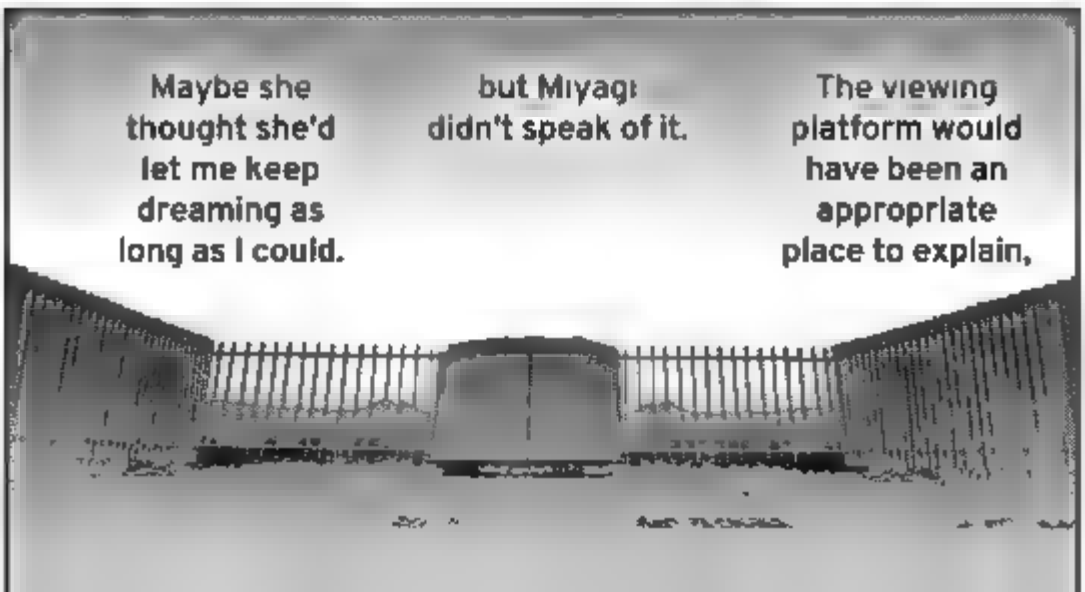
But I noticed the sheer gap past the railing
よく見たら手すりの先に絶妙な隙間が空いていて
just as Himeno was about to fall all the way to the ground
危うくヒメノはそこから地上まで一直線に落ちるところだったんだ

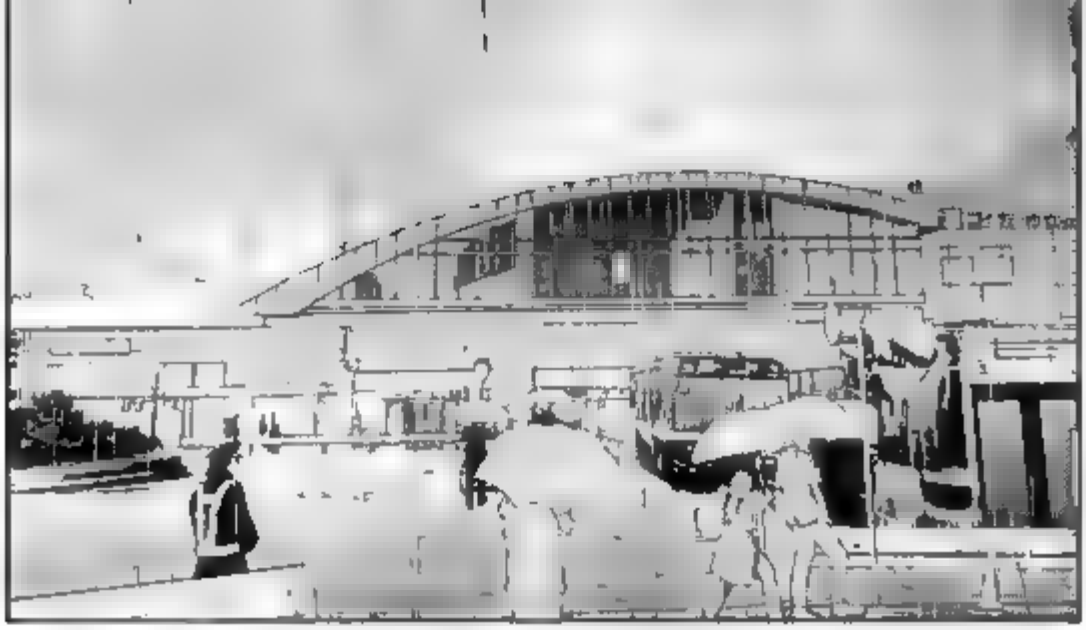
If I hadn't happened to be there to grab her,
she just might have.
She acts intellectual, but she can be a real goof too.
It's like,
you just can't leave her alone.

I got a scrape in all the hurry reaching for her,
but for that one day,
she got unusually nice...

She had yet to tell me something crucial.

At that point, she knew more than I did.


Maybe she thought she'd let me keep dreaming as long as I could.
but Miyagi didn't speak of it.
The viewing platform would have been an appropriate place to explain,



Outside the bookstore at 5
Okay t s no rush

Kusu-noki!
...

Even if Himeno
hadn't been someone I'd been waiting to see for a decade,

I still would have said she radiated beauty that day.
Bus was late because of the rain
Sorry to make you wait.
I'll treat you to some-thing.

No, allow me.
Forget about that for today.

Hmm.
So are you expecting a "next time"?
Yep.

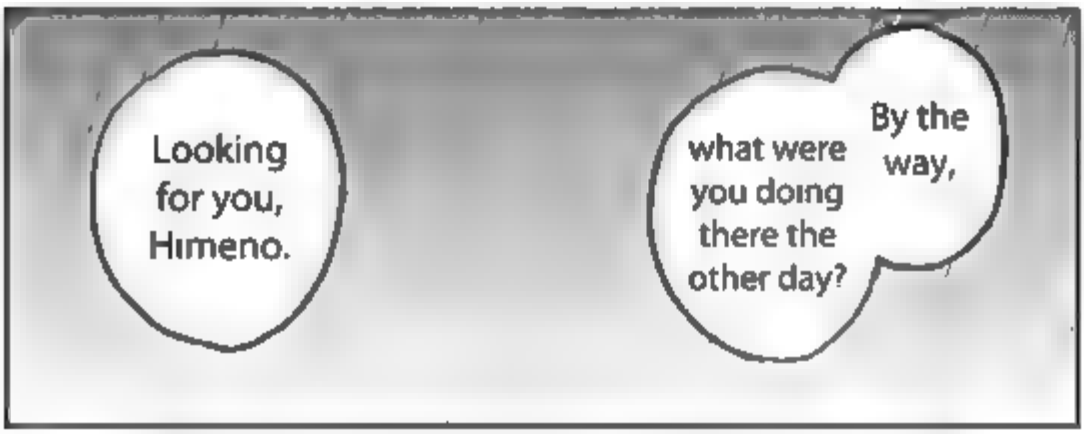
That's just the sort of line Himeno would say...

Himeno really hadn't changed a bit since then.

fwoomp

You were always the one who forgot his umbrella,
which meant I reluctantly
had to let you share mine.

Aha.
So then, wouldn't it be good to reverse it from now on?
Yeah, you're right.


Looking for you, Himeno.
By the way, what were you doing there the other day?

Liar
It's true
Ha-ha-ha...

and she was showing me her affection for me.
That's what I believed, and I didn't doubt it.
I felt that things were going great.
I was expressing my affection for Himeno,
I didn't really want to know what Himeno was thinking then,
deep in her heart.

寿命を買い取ってもらった。一年につき、一万円で。

I Sold Off My Lifespan, For 10,000 Yen A Year.

Chapter 9

Original: Sugaru Miaki Manga: Shoichi Taguchi
("Three Days of Happiness" from Media Works Bunko)
Character Design: E9L / Shoichi Taguchi

the gorgonzola cream pasta,
and a salad, please.
Prosci-utto di Parma

I'd like to hear about you first, Himeno.
No, let's start with you.
what you've been up to all these years, Kusunoki
I'd like to know

...Well, this isn't going to be all that interesting...
Starting with a disclaimer,
I talked about middle and high school.

How I started to see my scholarly abilities gradually decline in middle school third year
How I went to the best college-prep high school in the area, のの
yet ended up now attending a shockingly average college. ごはろ

And how I hadn't touched a paintbrush
since the winter when was 17 と
I was done in less than five minutes.
There was hardly anything worth talking about in my life.

Personally
I liked your pictures, Kusunoki.
If you were still drawing, I dunno what I would've done
Big difference from this other guy I know
Huh, so you gave up art?
That's too bad.

I could never come close
like it was nothing.
And you made such beautiful, breathtaking pictures
You were drawing *all* the time.

but sometimes I took your pictures home
and stared at them for ages.
You probably never noticed,

You never told me anything like that back then.
Well, at the time,
I was super antagonistic toward you.
I didn't want to admit you had talents other than studying

Yeah, I was antagonistic too.
We were about the same in academics,
yet it seemed the adults would always heap their praise on pretty little Himeno.

I thought it was just unfair that someone could be such a capable student *and* beautiful.
...

I guess nobody would've expected
a girl like that would drop out of high school
Yeah...

So you didn't know after all.
Huh
... Drop out?

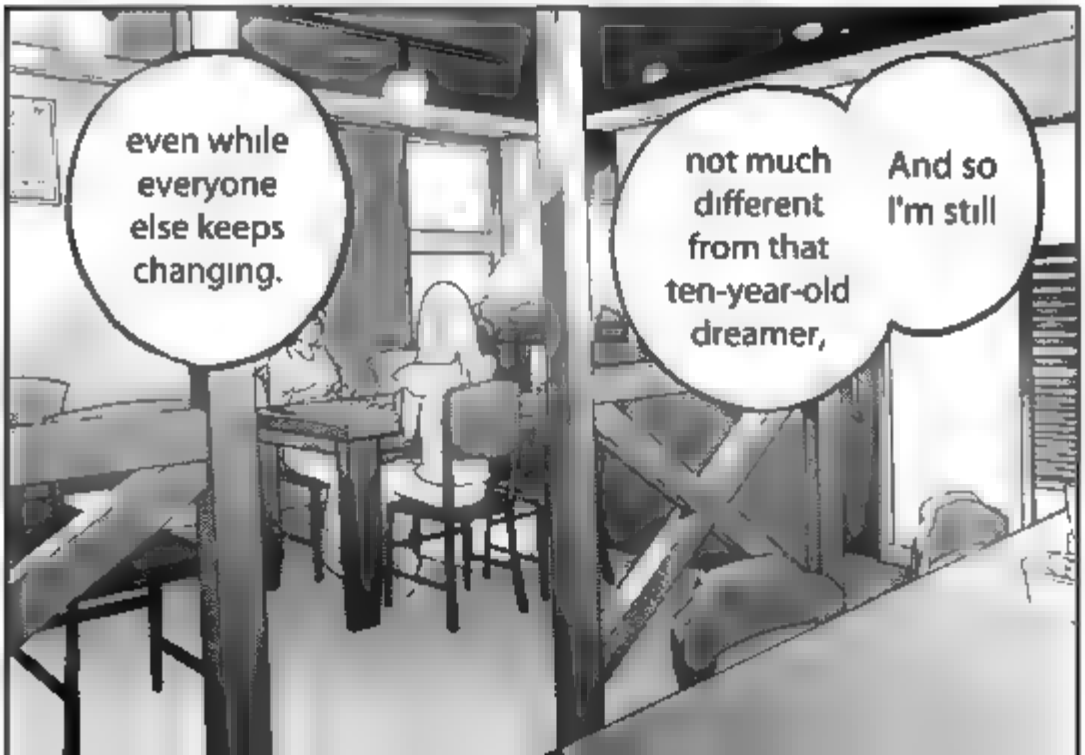
I can't say that this is too interesting either, but...
...Um,

She omitted the part about her pregnancy,
which Miyagi had given in her summary.
Himeno then explained the events leading up to her dropping out.

I couldn't stand the slightest imperfection,
so I messed things up way down to the roots.
Ultimately,
I suppose I was childish.

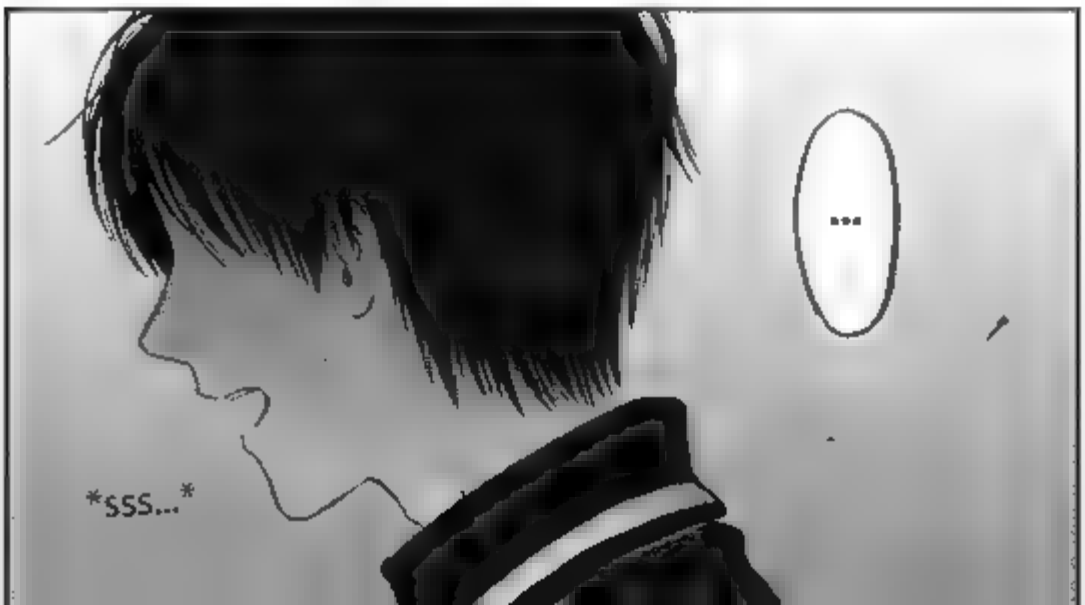
when I changed schools and left you.
It seems my mind's never changed
ever since that summer ten years ago,

...I'm sure that ten years ago,
I was a reasonably smart girl
But I suppose as a result,
it just gave rise to foolish pride deep down,
the notion I didn't need to mature any further.


And so I'm still not much different from that ten-year-old dreamer,
even while everyone else keeps changing.

So what
about you, Kusunoki?

I'm sure you've also
changed in these ten years?


...
sss...

You're not the only one
who hasn't changed, Himeno.

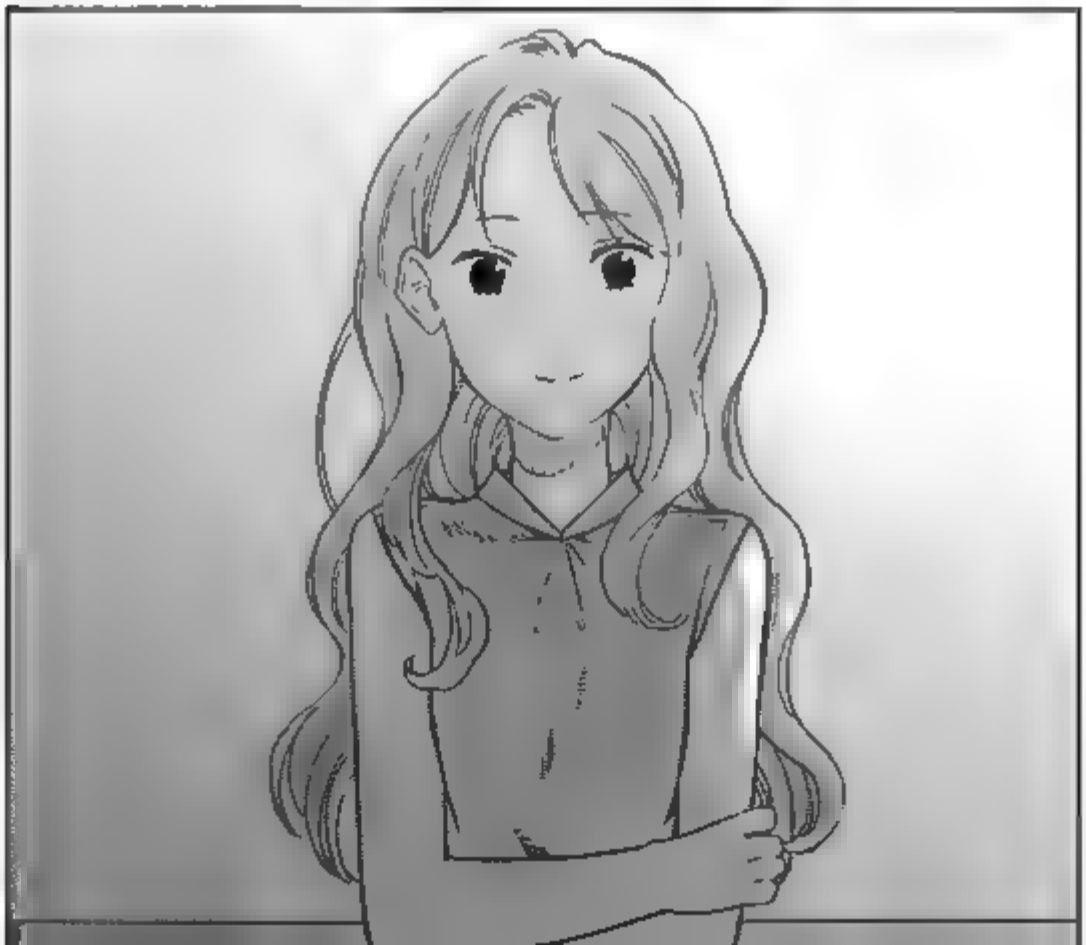
Since the day we parted, I too
haven't changed a bit.
Around this point,
I began to lose my calm.

But

That's why, just a few days ago -

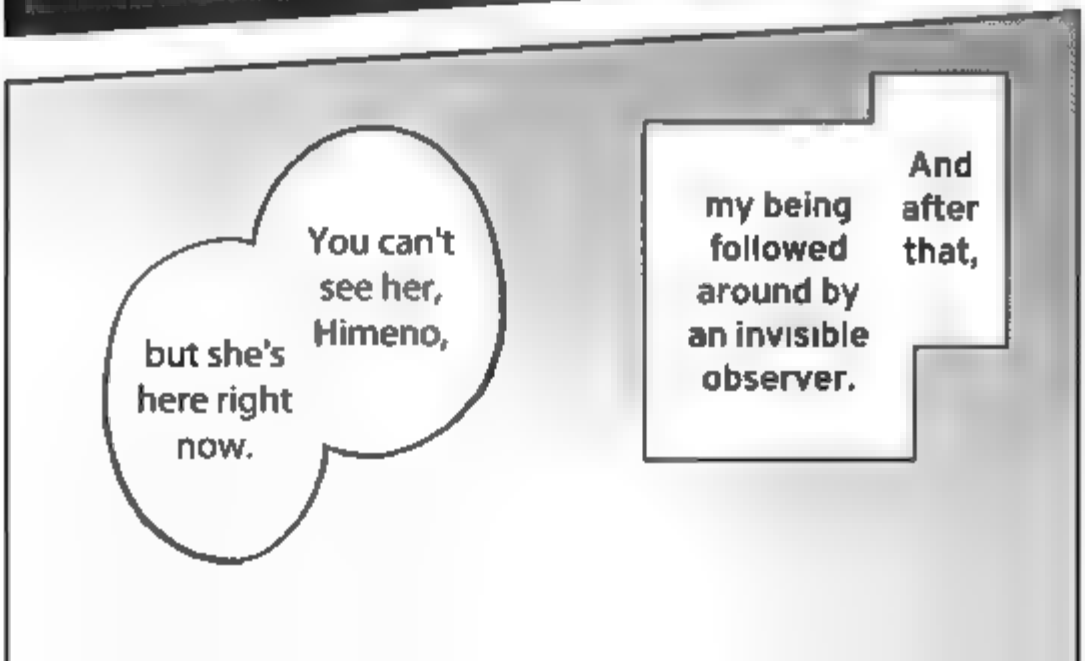
that wouldn't stop me.

...I sold off my lifespan.
For 10,000 yen per year.



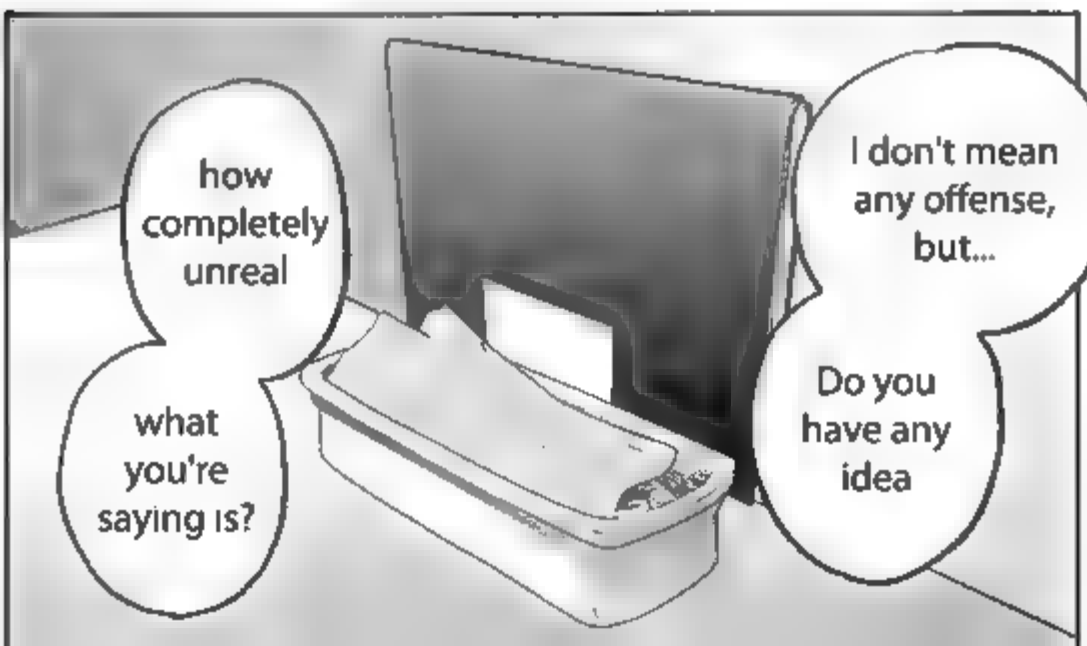
I let the jumbled mess that had built up inside me
out all at once.
I jumped from one topic to another.

The shop that dealed in lifespan.
Despairing over my future
and selling off all but three months of my life.


And after that,
my being followed around by an invisible observer.
You can't see her, Himeno,
but she's here right now.

She's a girl named Miyagi
And while she speaks in a really blunt way,
if you just talk with her she's actually very...
Here, right here.

Hey, Kusunoki?


how completely unreal
what you're saying is?
I don't mean any offense, but...
Do you have any idea

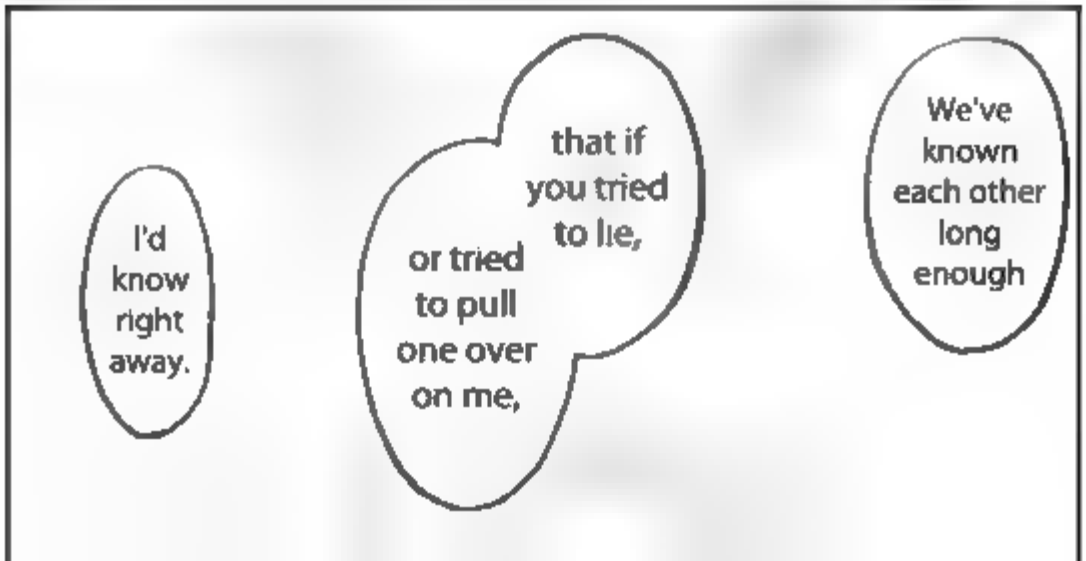
I'm pretty sure I know how ridiculous it sounds.
Yeah,

it is ridiculous.
Yes,

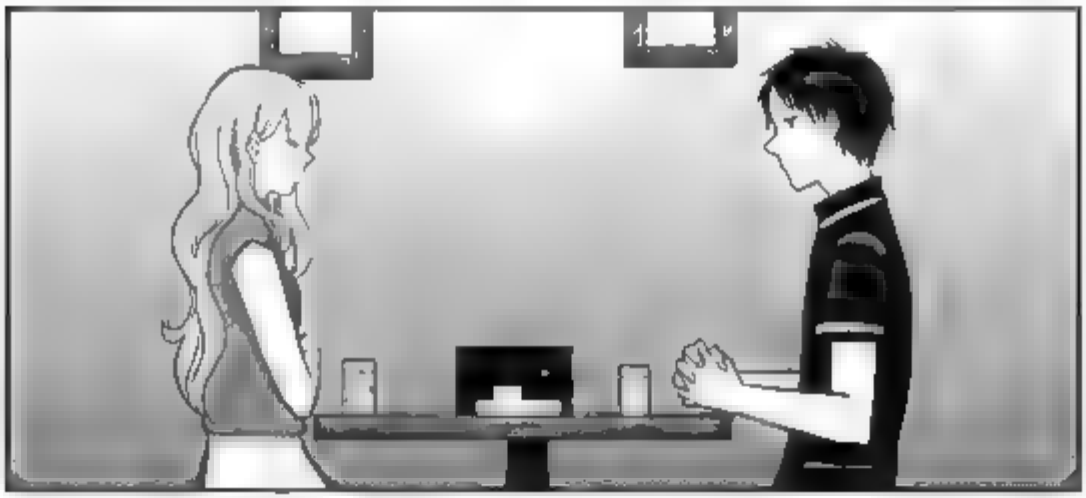
despite that,
I just...
...But you know,
Kusu-noki,

I can't think it's a lie.

Not the part about having little time left,
nor that there's a girl there observing you.


We've known each other long enough
that if you tried to lie,
or tried to pull one over on me,
I'd know right away.

you're not lying about selling your lifespan.
So while it's certainly hard to swallow,
I can believe that



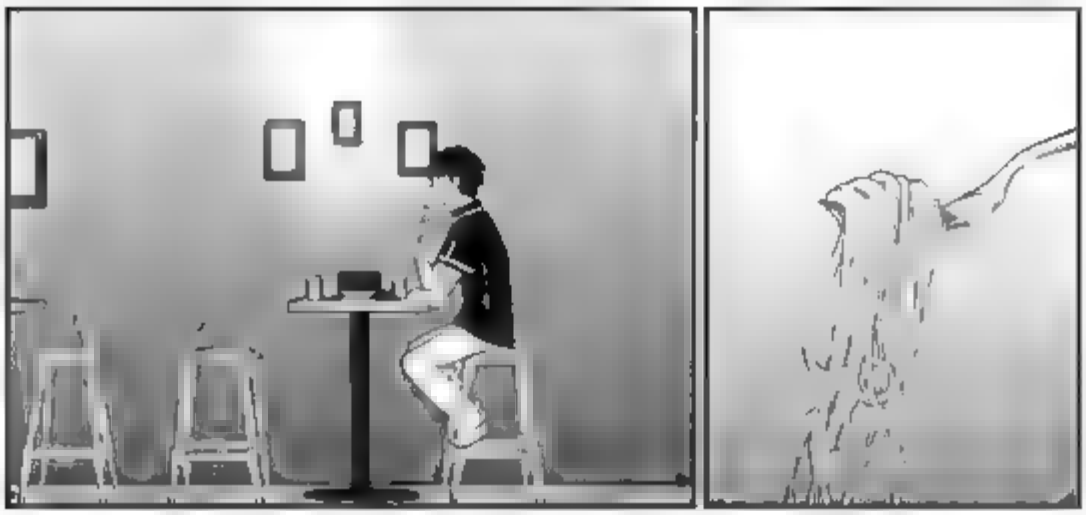
I've been hiding something too.
...I'm sorry for making you go first,
but actually,

We can continue this after we have our dinner.
Excuse me.
cough

Maybe something happened to Himeno
Sorry, but could you check the ladies' room?
Miyagi.

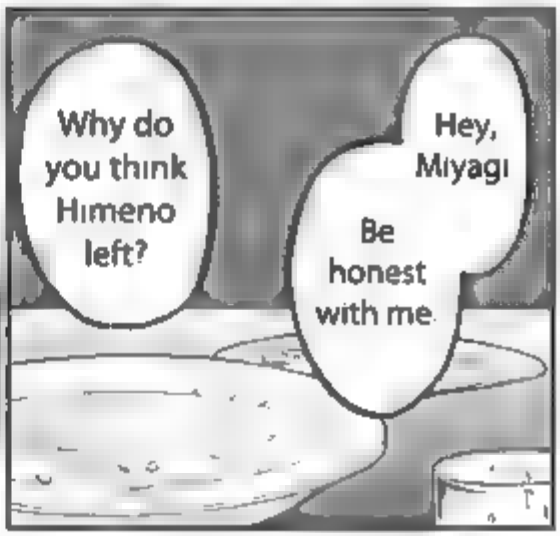
Himeno never came back.

I returned to my seat in defeat.
I walked around the restaurant, but she was nowhere to be found.



Quite tasty even when it's cold.

Per-haps
because she thought you were insane.


Why do you think Himeno left?
Hey, Miyagi
Be honest with me.

And she hid it,
for my sake.
But the truth was a little more compli-cated,
and Miyagi knew that too.

Your companion asked me to give you this.
Sir!

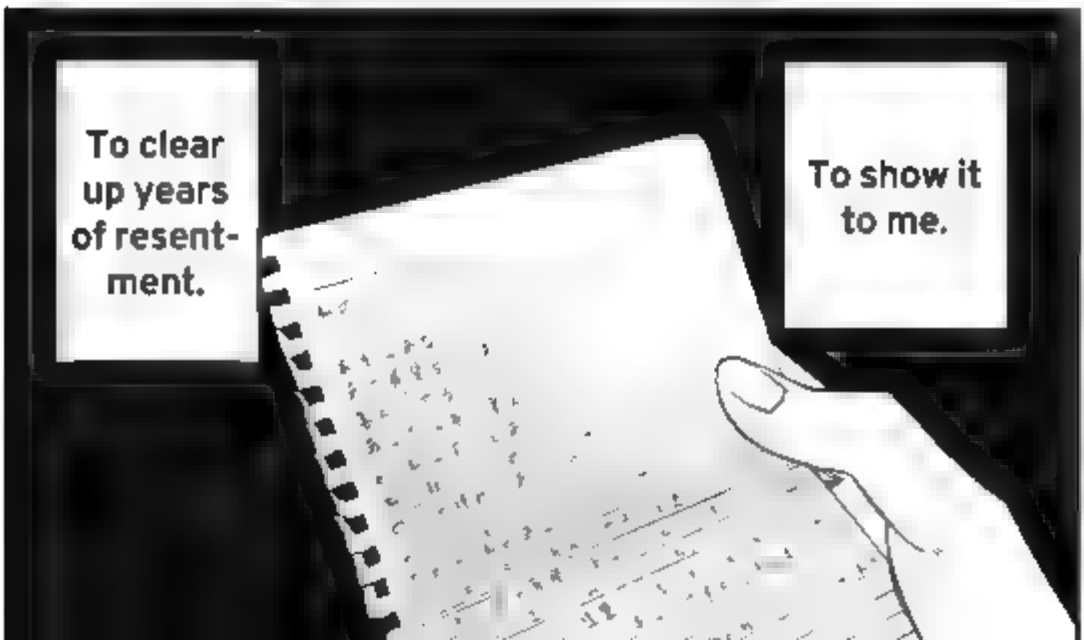
You knew about this and kept it from me?
...Miyagi

No need to apologize.
You let me have a good dream.
I did.
I'm sorry.

Himeno would've succeeded in her objective
Is that right?
And in my original life,

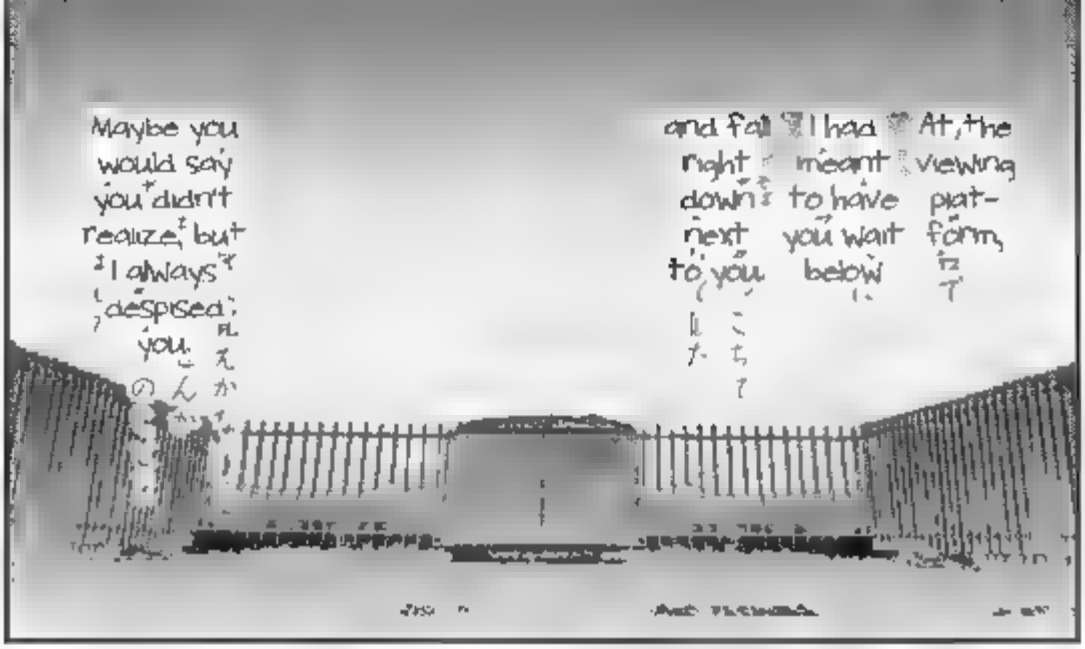
Ms. Himeno would have ..
done it right before your eyes, Mr. Kusunoki.

Correct.

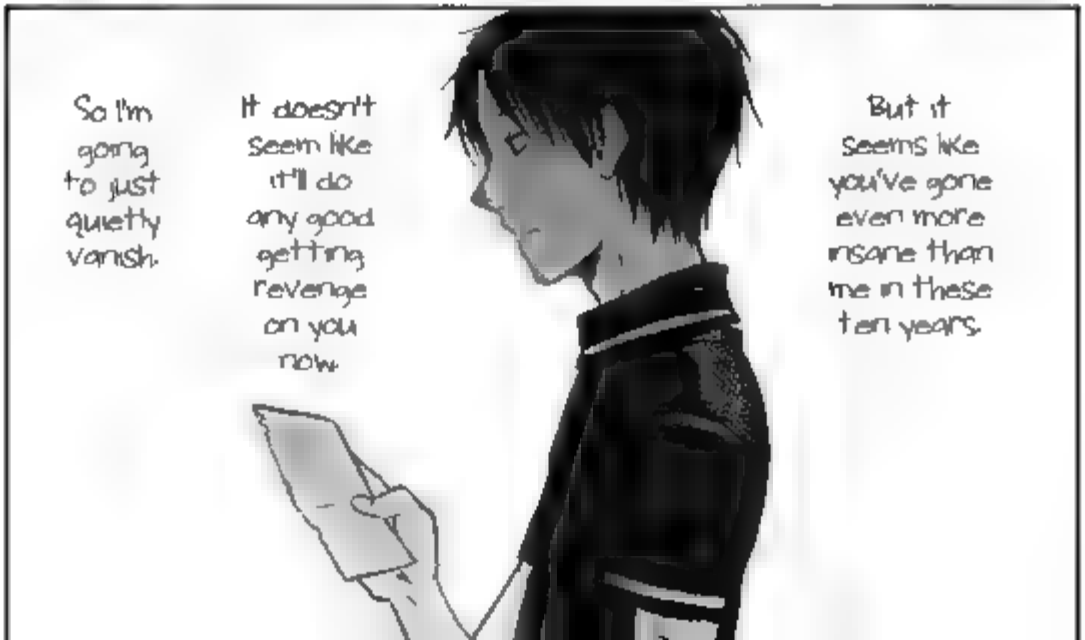

To clear up years of resent-ment.
To show it to me.

I had intended to die right in front of you.

To my one and only childhood friend.


Maybe you would say you didn't realize, but I always despised you.
and fall right down next to you
I had meant to have you wait below
At the viewing platform,

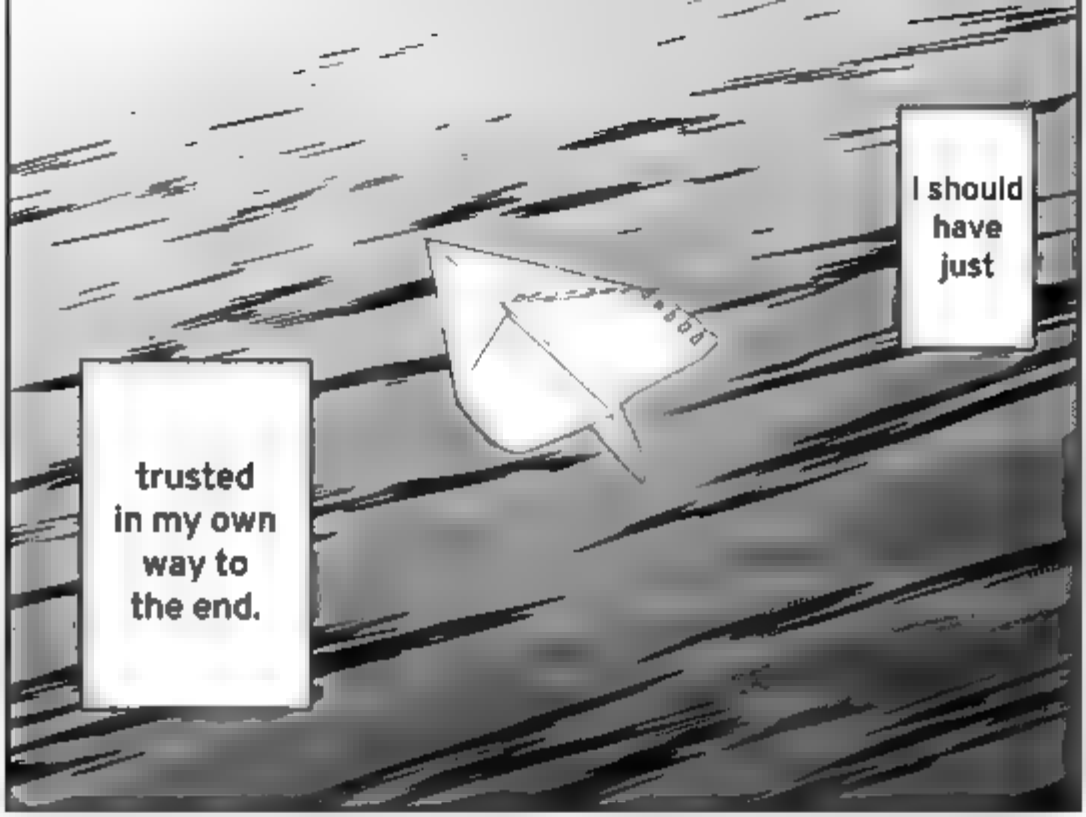
So now that you consider me someone you can't do without thought I'd kill myself
I did get a letter from Himeno
For never responding to my cries for help, then casually appearing before me now.
I never got a reply
answered with a similarly banal letter
But in the end, I couldn't hate you more

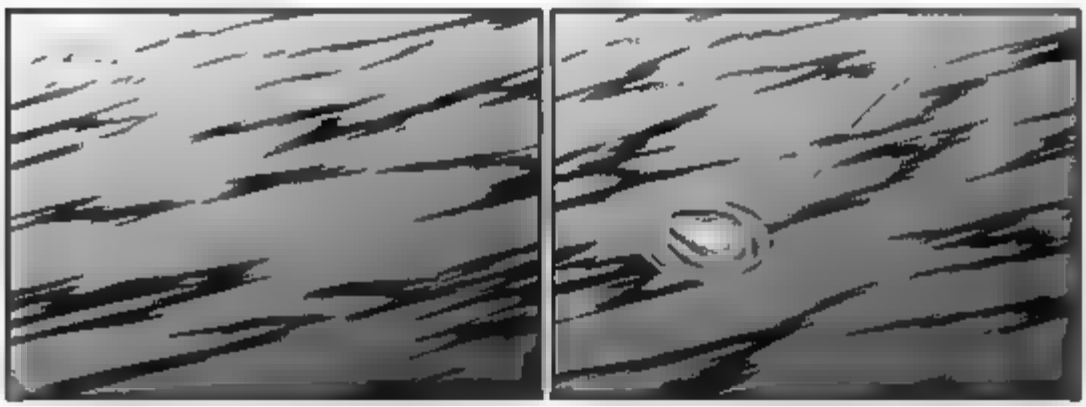

So I'm going to just quietly vanish.
It doesn't seem like it'll do any good getting revenge on you now.
But it seems like you've gone even more insane than me in these ten years.

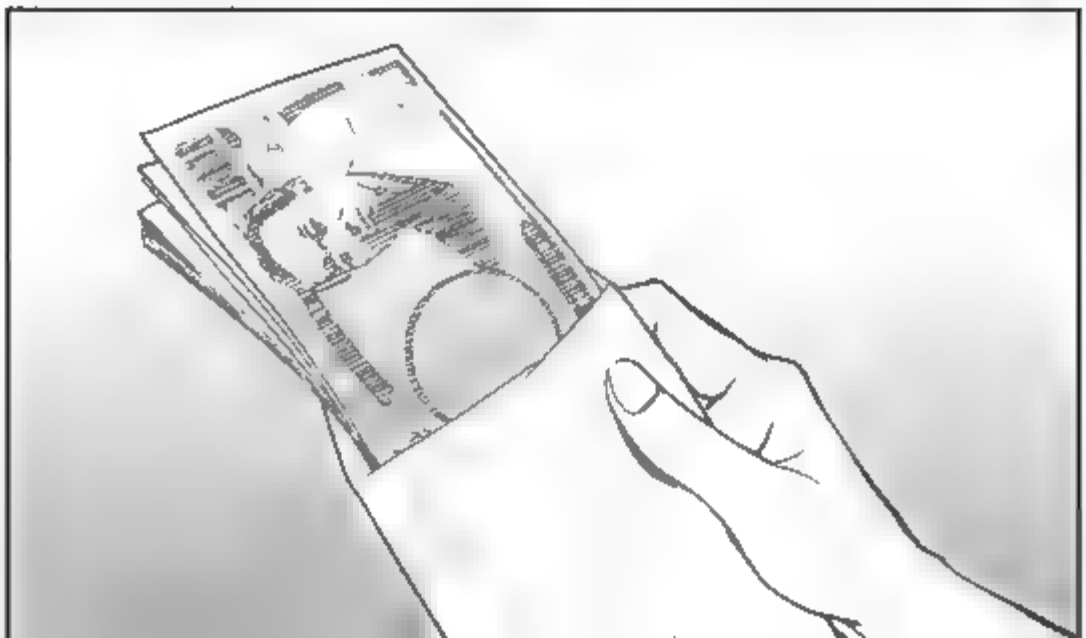
only hope that what you said about having little time left to live is true.
Good-bye.

What a fool I am.

to avoid feeling like this.
I'd lived alone all my life

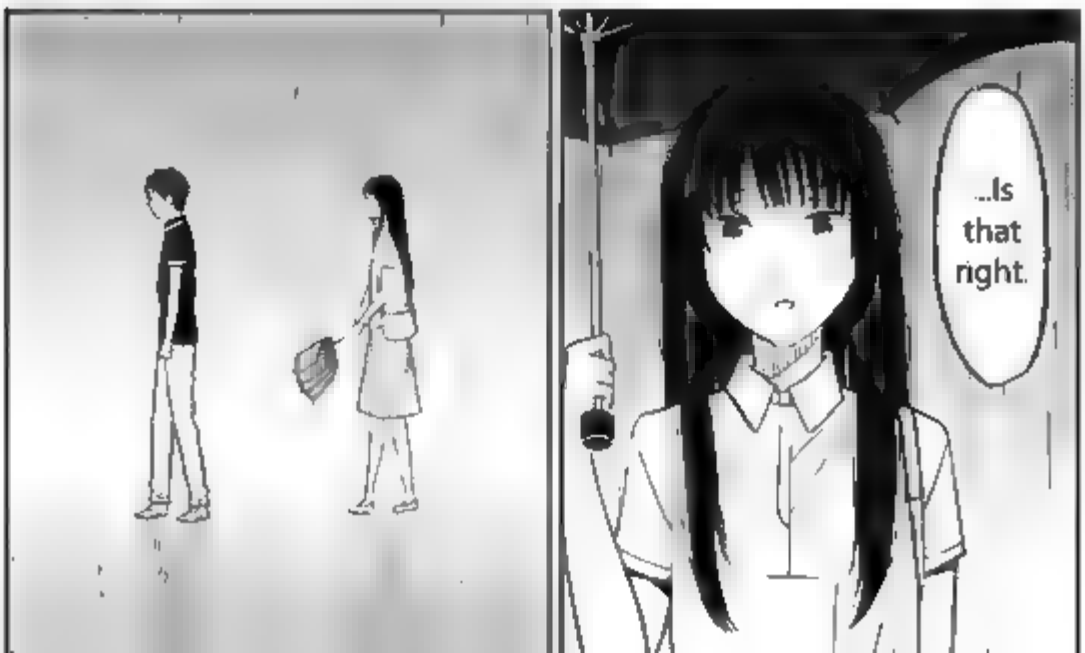

I should have just
trusted in my own way to the end.





You'll be drenched.

I'm in a getting-drenched mood.
As you can see,


...Is that right.

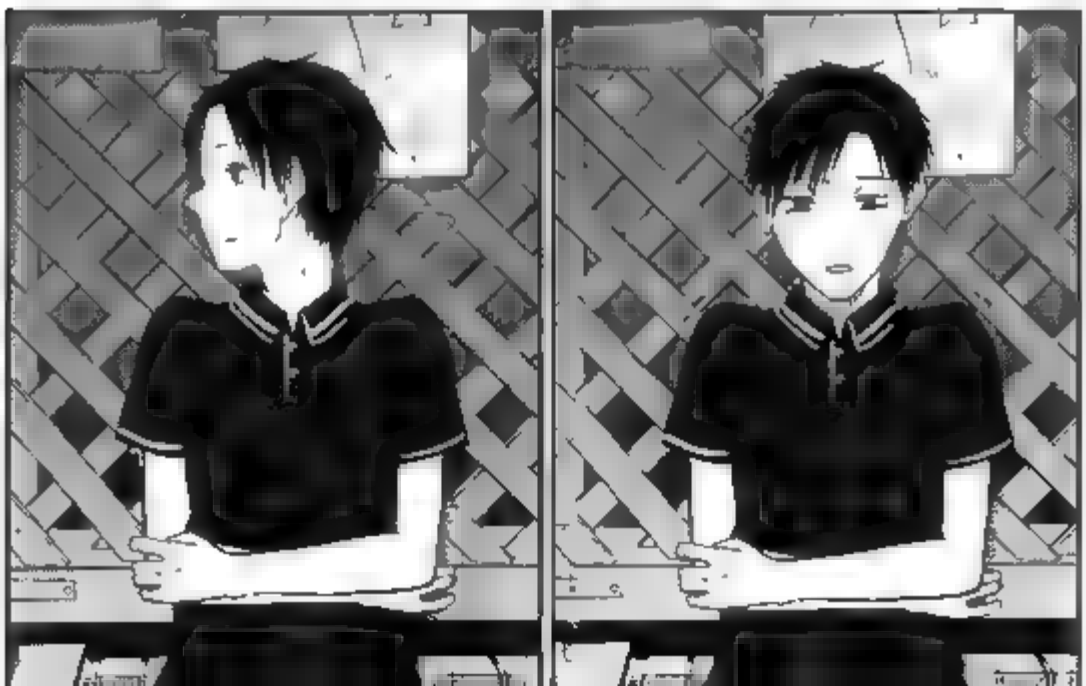
As you can see,
I am in a getting-drenched mood
You don't have to get drenched, you know.

寿命を買い取ってもらった。一年につき、一万円で。

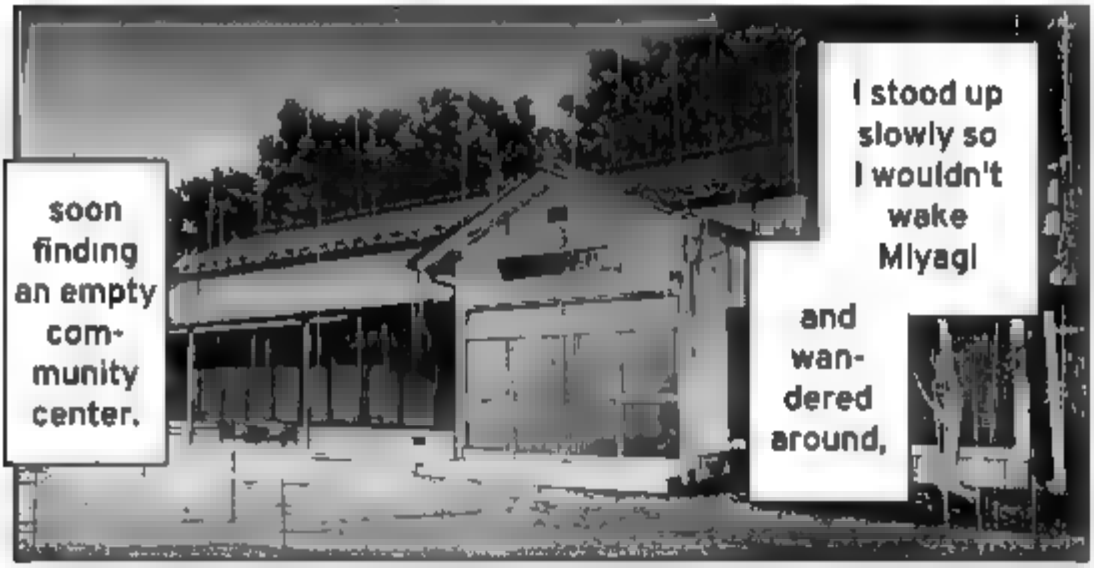
I Sold Off My Lifespan, For 10,000 Yen A Year.

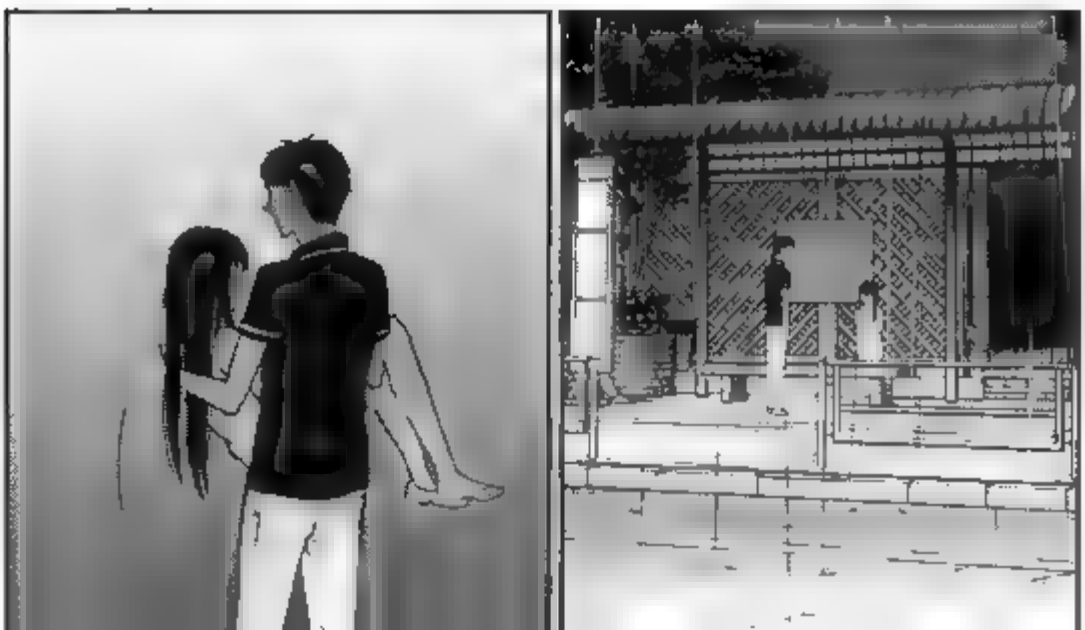
Chapter 10

Original: Sugaru Miaki Manga: Shoichi Taguchi
("Three Days of Happiness" from Media Works Bunko)
Character Design: E9L / Shoichi Taguchi

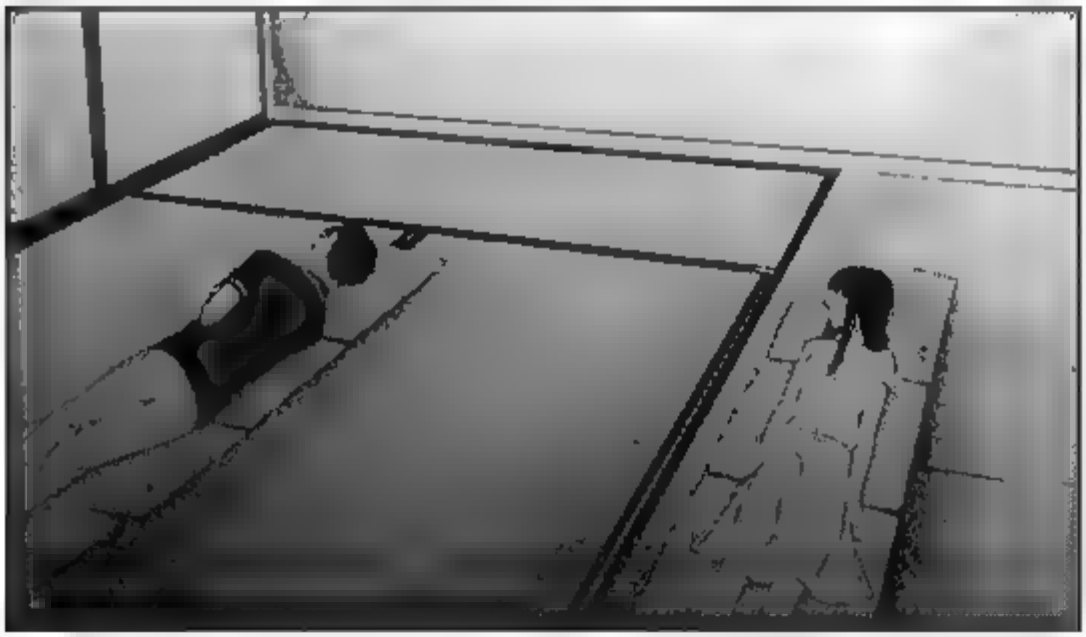


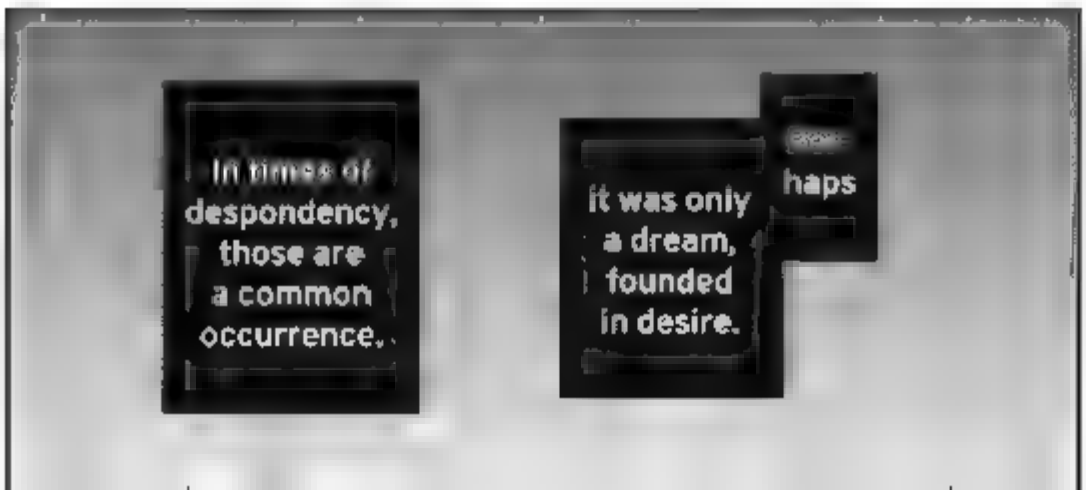
Seeing Miyagi hold her knees, trying to stay warm and sleep,
I pitied her for having to deal with the selfish actions
of an idiot like me.


I stood up slowly so I wouldn't wake Miyagi
and wandered around,
soon finding an empty community center.



Miyagi
feigned sleep the whole time.
Certainly it would have to wake up
a girl who slept even lighter than me.




In times of despondency, those are a common occurrence.
it was only a dream, founded in desire.
haps

I don't think it lasted
any more than a minute.
Even in summer,
she smelled like a clear winter morning.
I knew it was Miyagi because of her smell.

In my drowsiness, I thought:

Just how much
has Miyagi helped me?

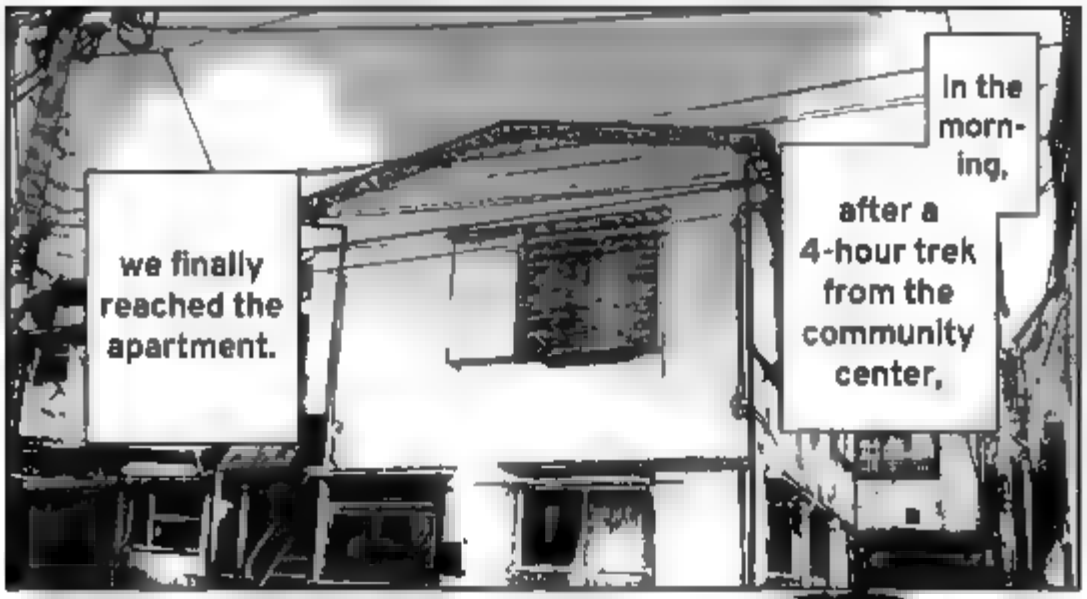
How cornered would I feel now
if Miyagi weren't there?

I'll just die quietly.

I'll go back to my usual, self-sufficient, modest life where I don't count on anyone for anything.

Like a cat.
I'll expire silently and in secret.

So I secretly vowed.


In the morning,
after a 4-hour trek from the community center,
we finally reached the apartment.

The shower
My body was drenched in sweat
and my feet were blistered.

I'll try to get out quick, at least
"You go in first"?
Nah, she'd probably just refuse

Miyagi was free to take showers and eat
only while I was sleeping.
My under-standing was that

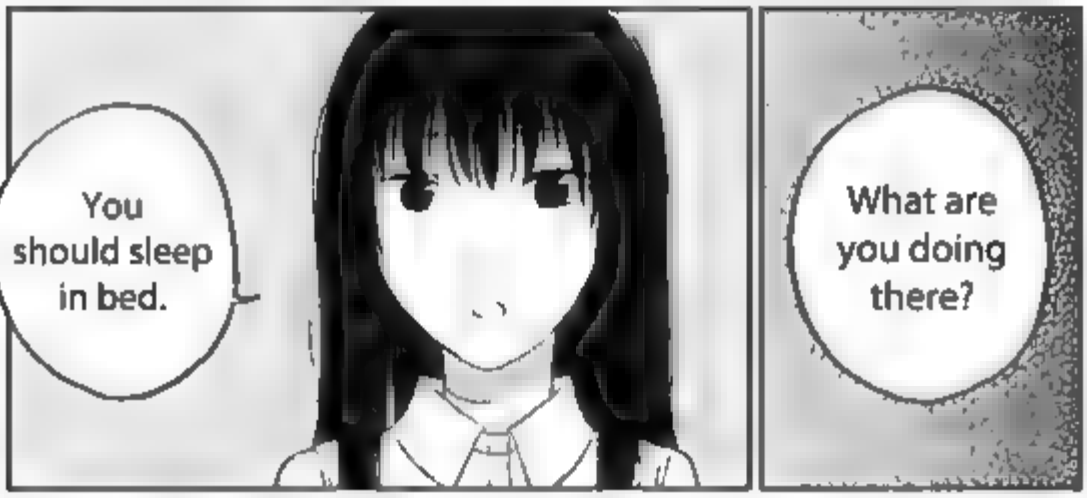
スッ

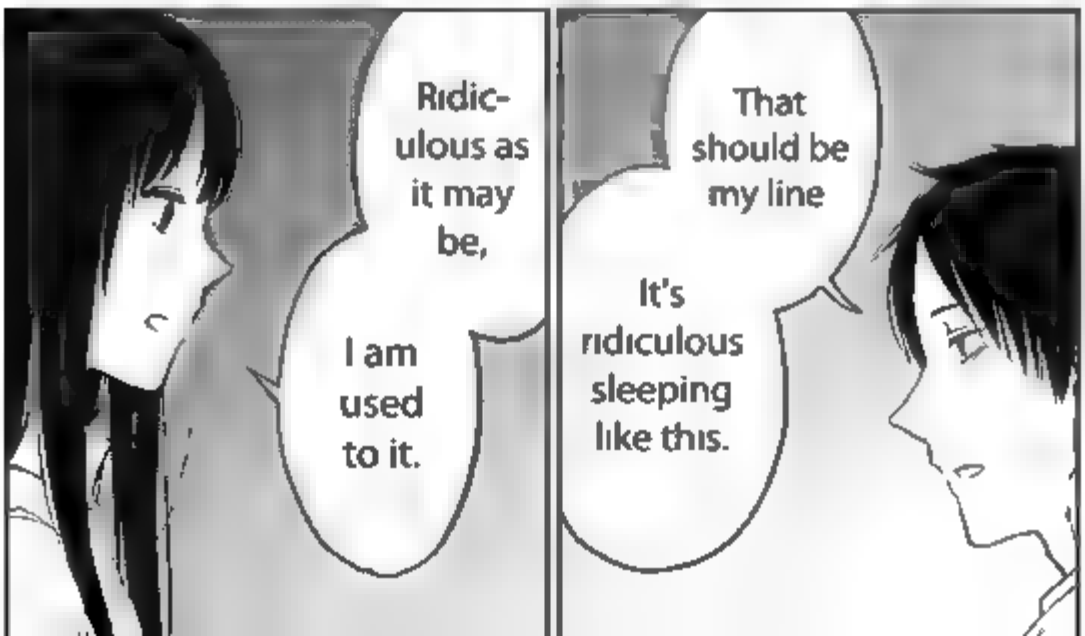
Mr Kusunoki
Mr Kusunoki, are you sleeping?
I ask, of course,
because you appear to be feigning sleep.

...Good night.
I'll be using your shower.
If you did so out of concern for me,
it'd be nice
And, if you are indeed, I would like to say...

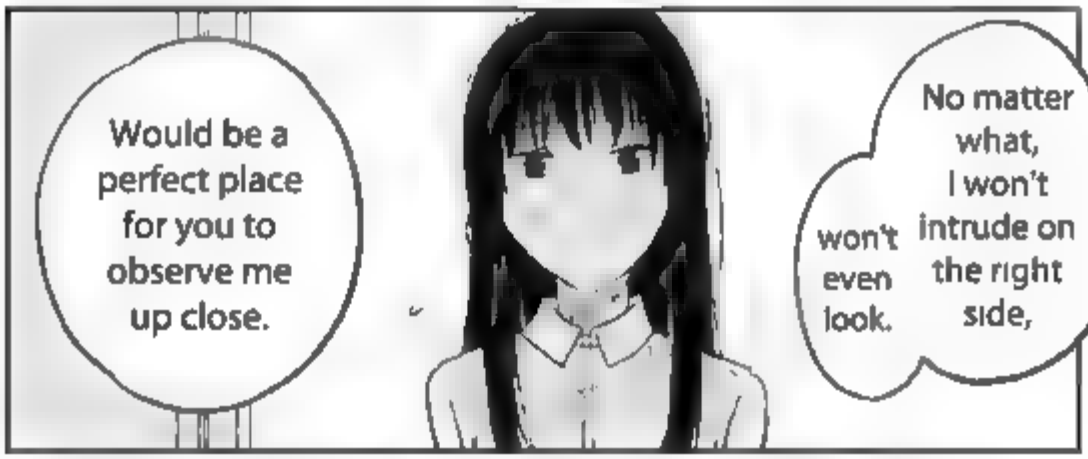
shut

But as long as I sat there,
sleep just wouldn't come.
Just as an experiment, I tried imitating the way Miyagi slept.

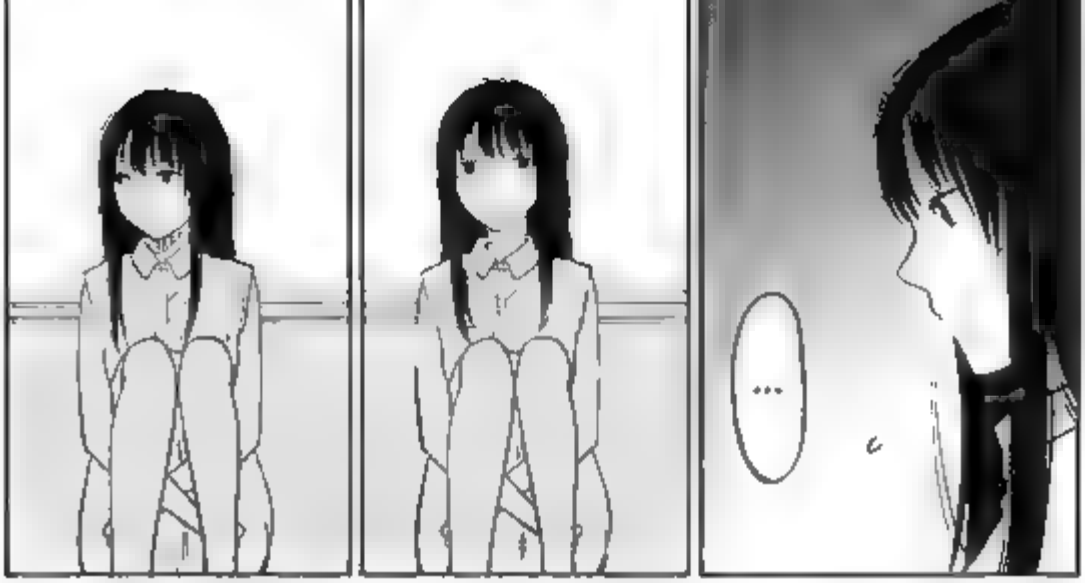

You should sleep in bed.
What are you doing there?


Ridic-ulous as it may be,
I am used to it.
That should be my line
It's ridiculous sleeping like this.

I'm sleeping on the left side from now on.


Would be a perfect place for you to observe me up close.
No matter what, I won't intrude on the right side, won't even look.

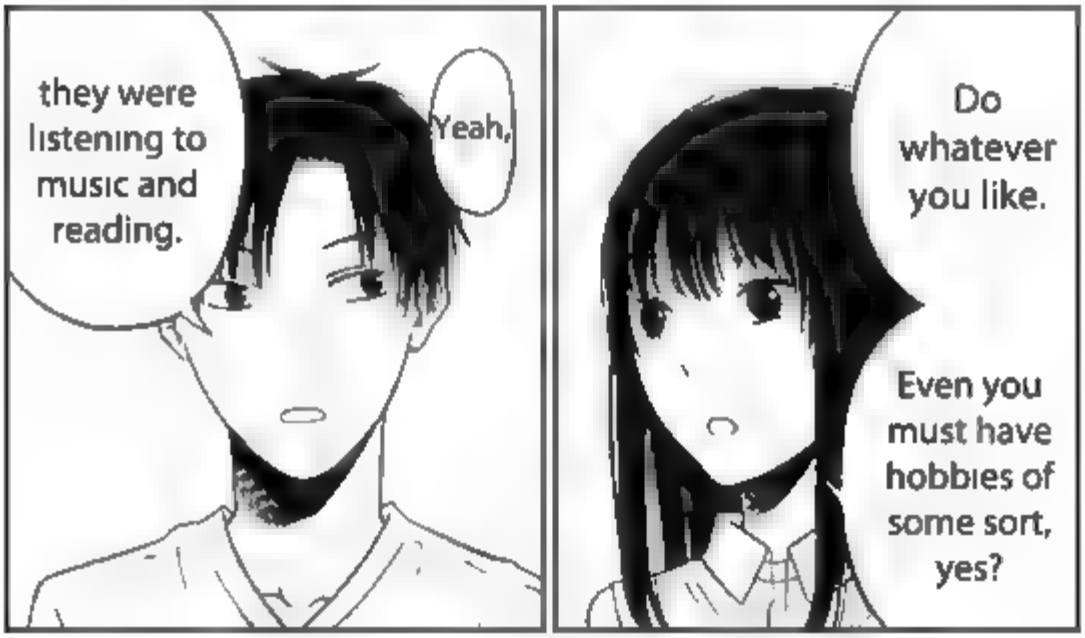
Are you still half-asleep, Mr Kusunoki?
It's up to you if you want to use it or not, but I'll sleep on the left at any rate.

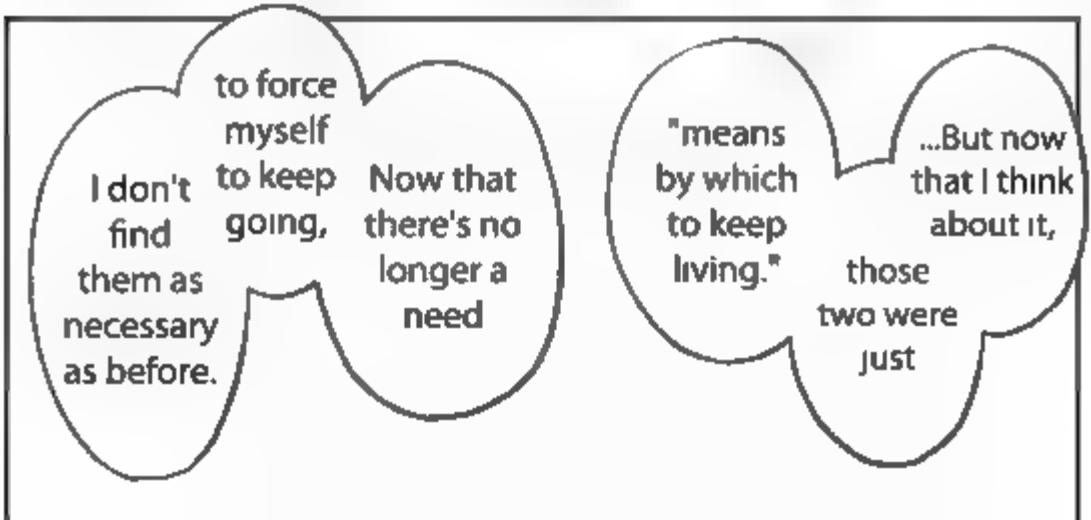


From tomorrow on,
I'll sleep in my usual spot.
I was just a little tired today, you see.

But thank you very much.
At the ATM,
I with-drew the last of my part-time money.

So now what?
I've done everything on my Things to Do Before I Die list.
Running out of things to do.


they were listening to music and reading.
Yeah.
Do whatever you like.
Even you must have hobbies of some sort, yes?


I don't find them as necessary as before.
to force myself to keep going,
Now that there's no longer a need
"means by which to keep living."
...But now that I think about it, those two were just

Those are awfully specific.
or playing games on ancient arcade cabinets?
Do you like walking and counting railroad ties, say,
Do you not appreciate anything more on the simple side?

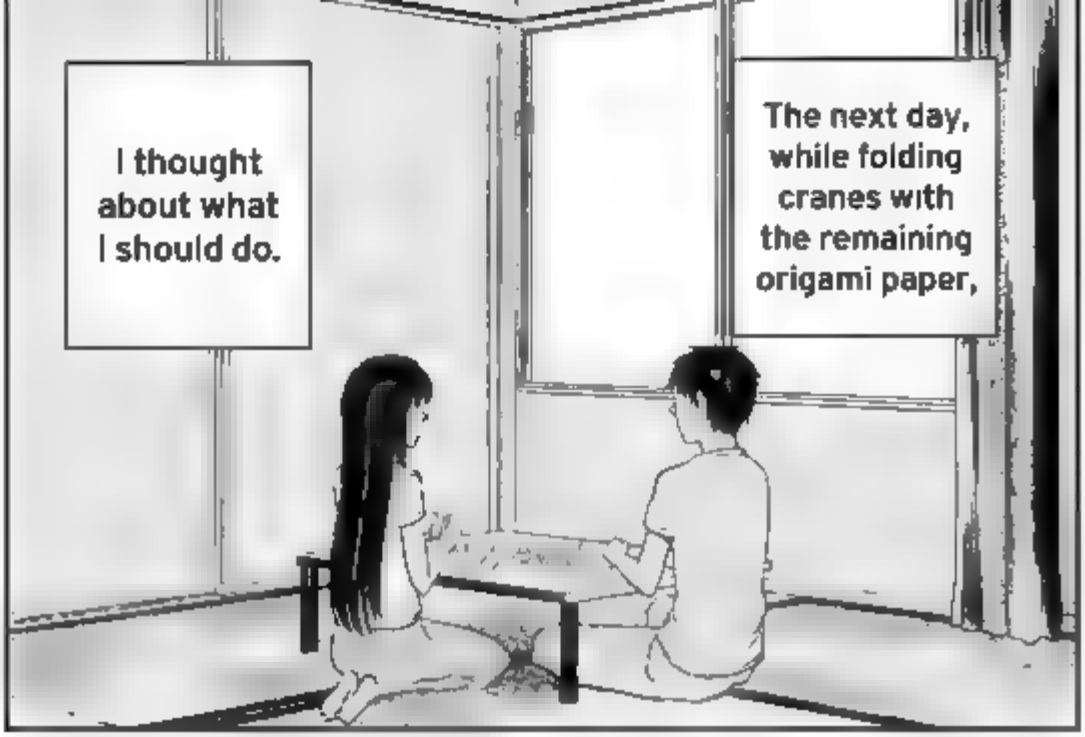
There was even one who spent his last month of life
lying in the back of a pickup truck and looking up at the sky.
Yes.
Let me guess, you observed guys like that?

It's a fresh feeling, watching the scenery fly backward.
A rather nice way to pass the time.

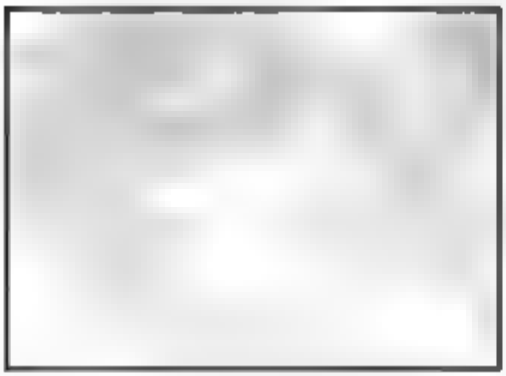
No matter how stupid or pointless the story,

when it came from Miyagi's lips,

it felt very warm and soothing.


I thought about what I should do.
The next day, while folding cranes with the remaining origami paper,

Yeah, wouldn't really mind just drowning in paper cranes.
may not be so bad either.
Simply keeping on like this



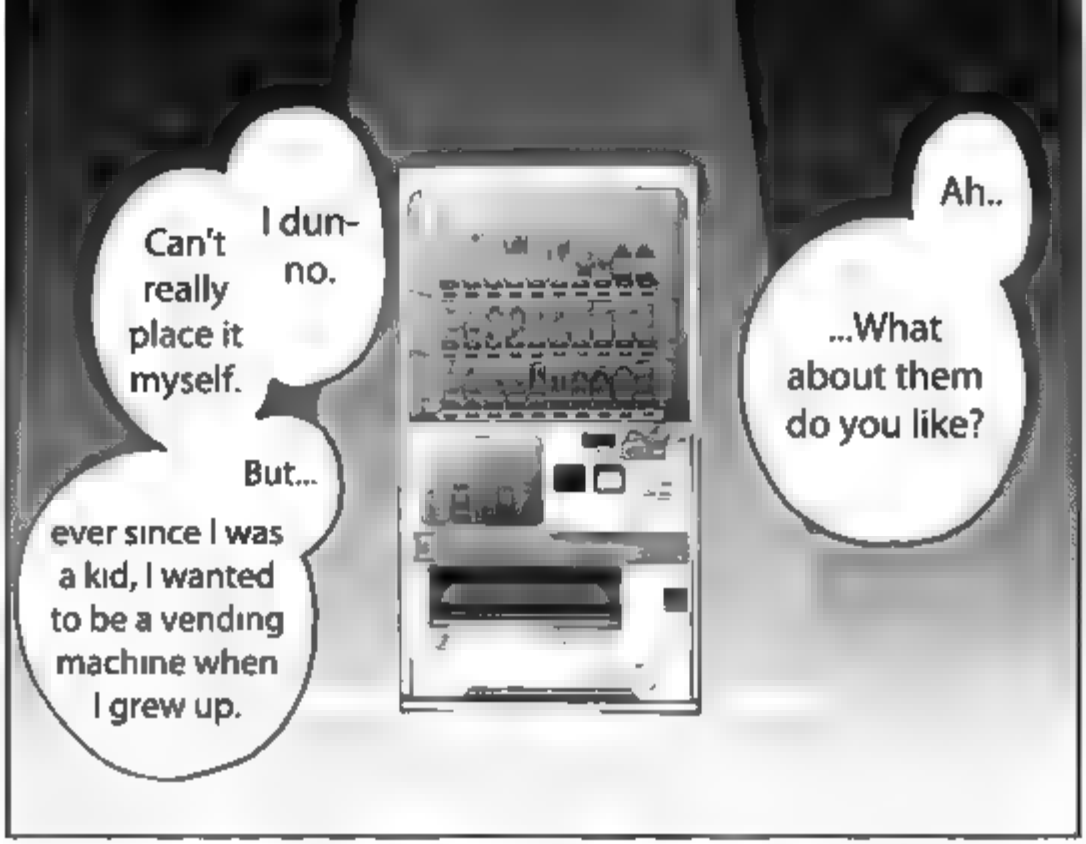
商店

Oh...

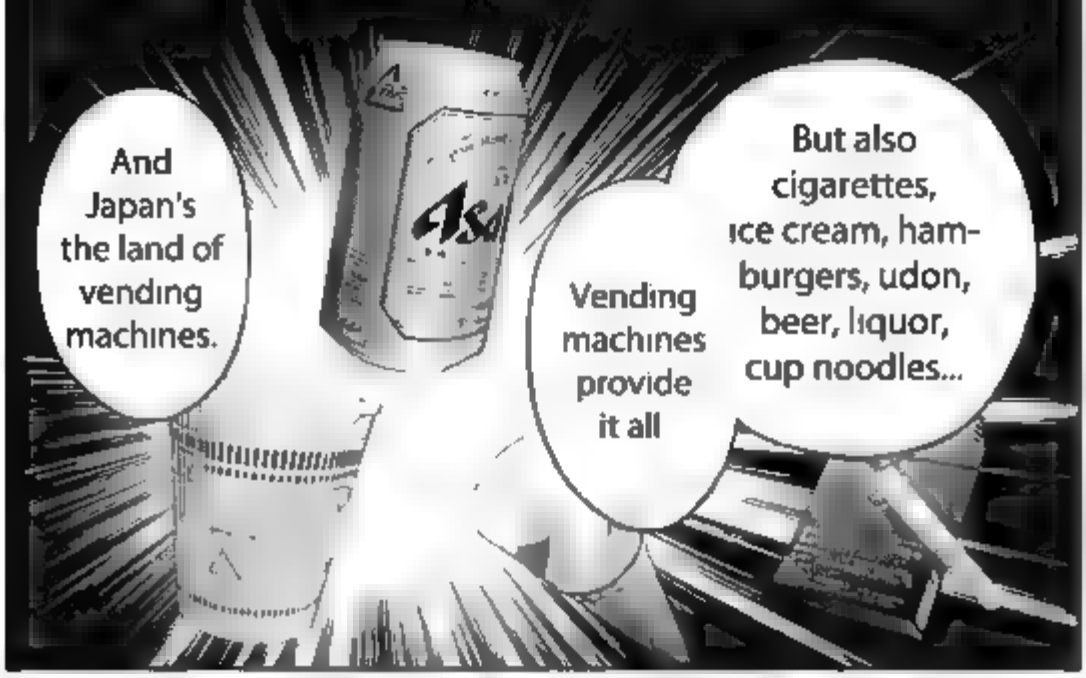
I just remembered
something that I can really, truly say I like.
It's really stupid, but...

What is it?
Um

I love vending machines
...
Then please, say it.
CIGARETTES


Ah..
...What about them do you like?
I dun- no.
Can't really place it myself.
But...
ever since I was a kid, I wanted to be a vending machine when I grew up.

Um.
Just checking, but by vending machines,
you mean coffee- selling, soda- selling...
ma- chines like this one?
Yeah.
?


And Japan's the land of vending machines.
Vending machines provide it all
But also cigarettes, ice cream, hamburgers, udon, beer, liquor, cup noodles...

I like to use them,
and I even like just looking at them.
Yeah, that's right.
And so you... have a love for vending machines.

It was a stupid hobby.
That's a unique hobby.
Hmm, well

No, that I don't think I can ever understand.

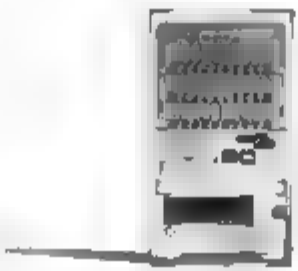
My burning desire to become a vending machine?

But, I think I do understand.

They offer a clear function, with a sense of invariance and permanence.

They offer more than the sum of their products.

Simply provide money, and they will always offer warmth.



vending machines are always there.

But, you see...

Vending machines are important to us observers as well.

As they don't ignore us.

Thank you.

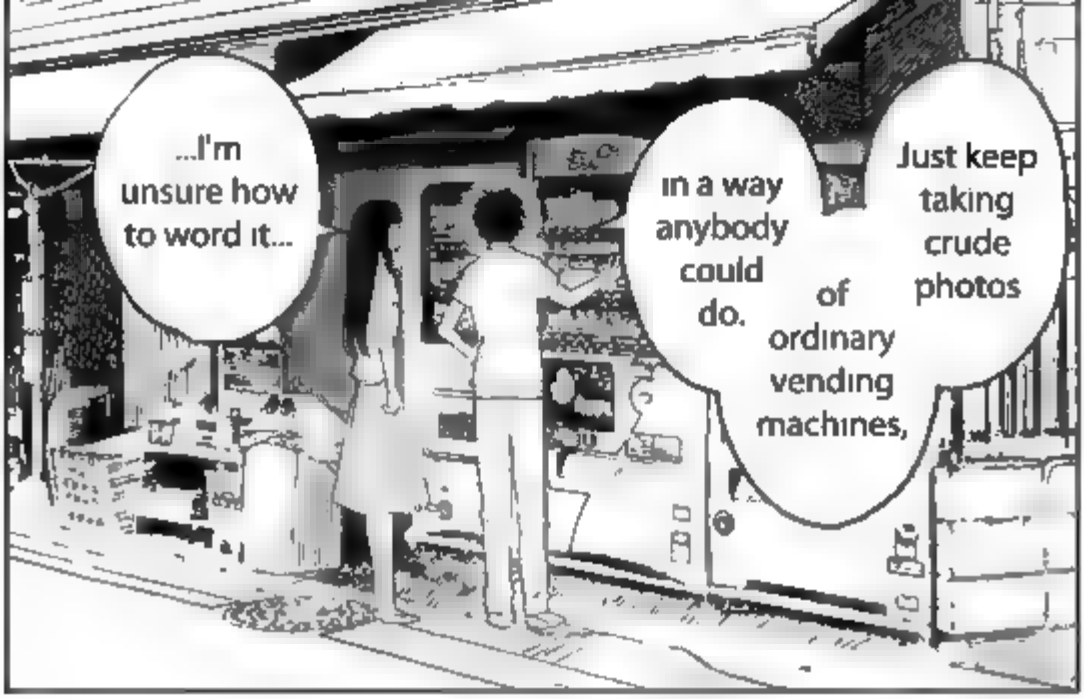
Wow, that's something

You said what I wanted to say a lot better than I could

Well, I'll have to explain something else I like.
But what would you actually want to do?
So then, it's all well and good to know you like them.

The cigar shop owner goes out in front every morning, without fail, to take a photo.
Every time I come to this cigarette shop,
I'm reminded of a part from Paul Auster's "Smoke."

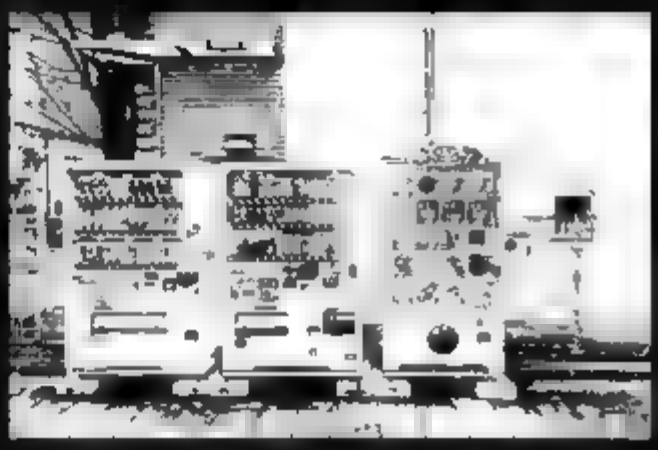
I want to imitate him and take photos that are meaningless at a glance.
...So, yeah
That challenge to the idea of "meaning" really struck me.

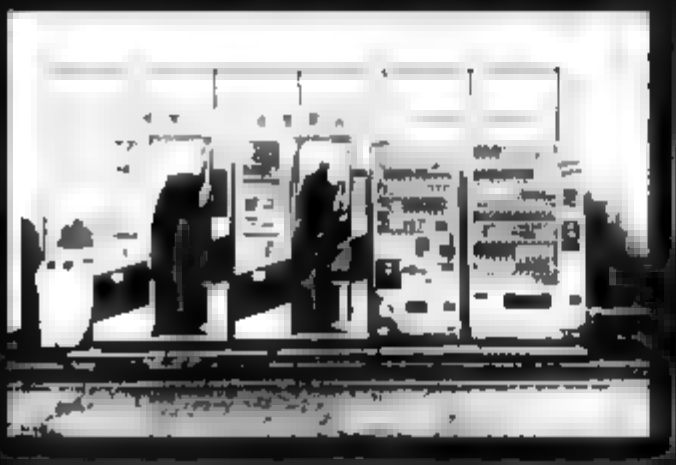

...I'm unsure how to word it...
Just keep taking crude photos of ordinary vending machines, in a way anybody could do.

And so,
but I think I like that too.

my vending machine tours began.

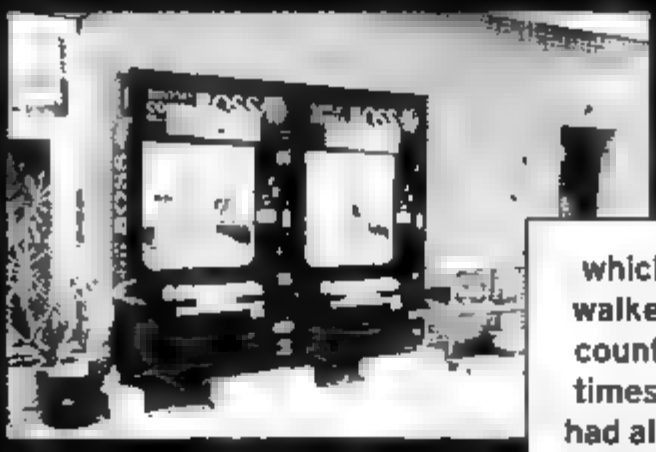
Whenever I took a picture, I tried to get the stuff around the vending machine in view as well.





What kind of area the machine was in, and in what condition...

That's what I wanted to capture.



There were many vending machines which I'd walked by countless times, yet had always overlooked.

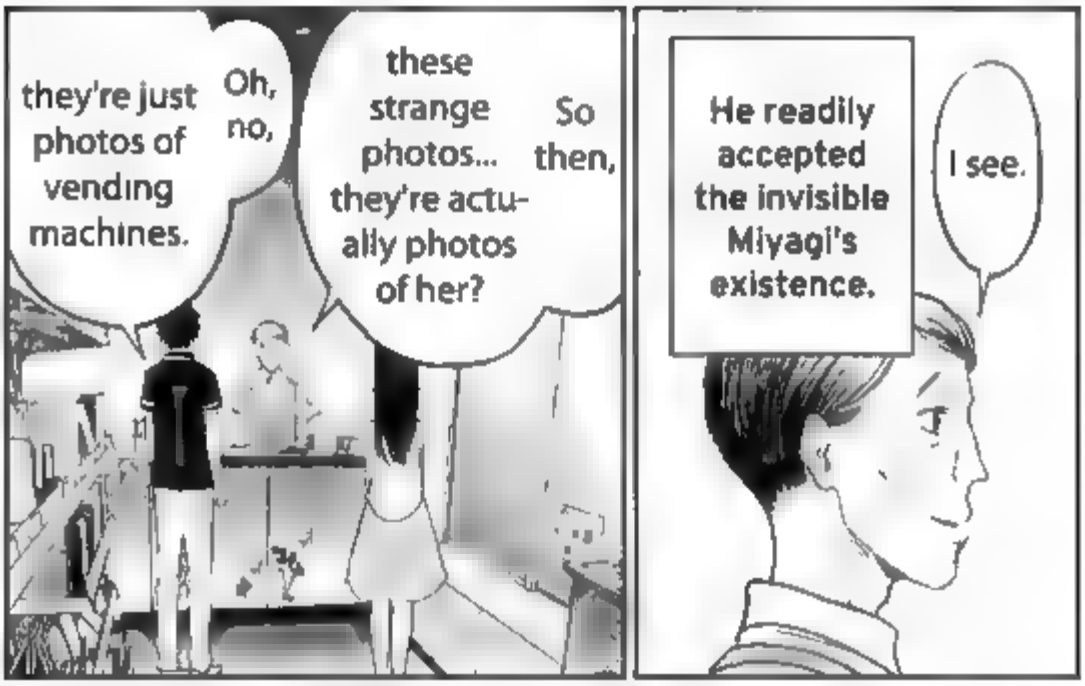
Discoveries like that made my heart dance.

At the start of each day, I'd head for the photo studio.
During the 30 minutes it took for the film to develop,
I would go have breakfast.

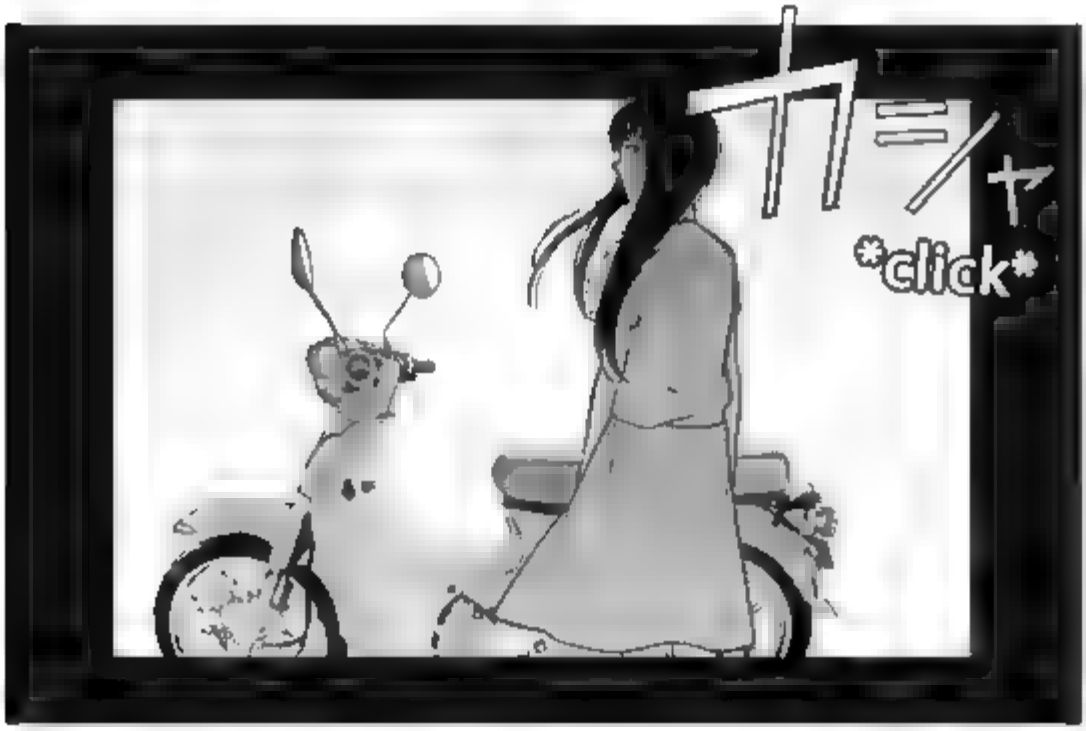
At the end of the day,
I'd lay out the photos developed that morning,
and carefully put each one into an album.

One day, the owner of the photo studio
saw me laughing with Miyagi and asked:
...I was wonder ing,
is there someone there?

Hello.
Her job's to observe me
A girl named Miyagi.
That's right.


they're just photos of vending machines.
Oh, no,
these strange photos... they're actually photos of her?
So then,
He readily accepted the invisible Miyagi's existence.
I see.

...he said.
Well, keep at it, then.
The owner's face told how little he understood.


click

What are you doing?
Oh, just figured I'd take one, after what the photo guy said.
It will only appear as a meaningless photo of a bike to others.
All my pictures are meaningless to others.

I'd be concerned if they weren't.
Of course, people like the photo studio owner were the minority.
Sorry to make you wait
Alright, let's go.
Not like I cared what anybody thought.
... Well.
The man who lived next door shot me a look of disgust.

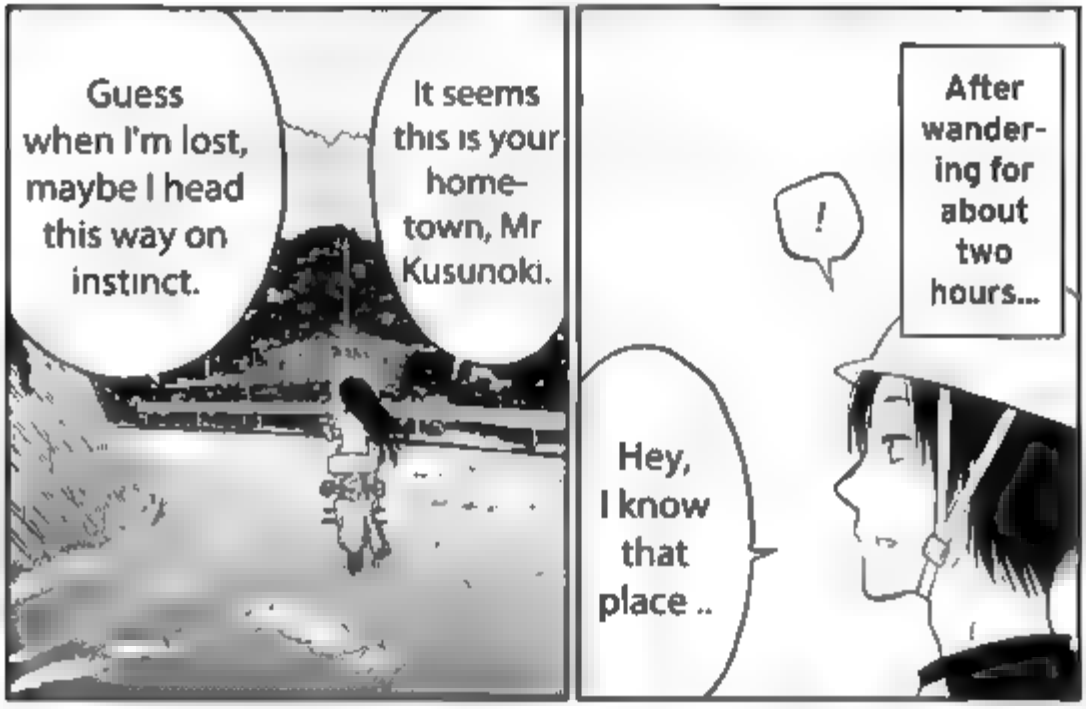
寿命を買い取ってもらった。一年につき、一万円で。

I Sold Off My Lifespan, For 10,000 Yen A Year.

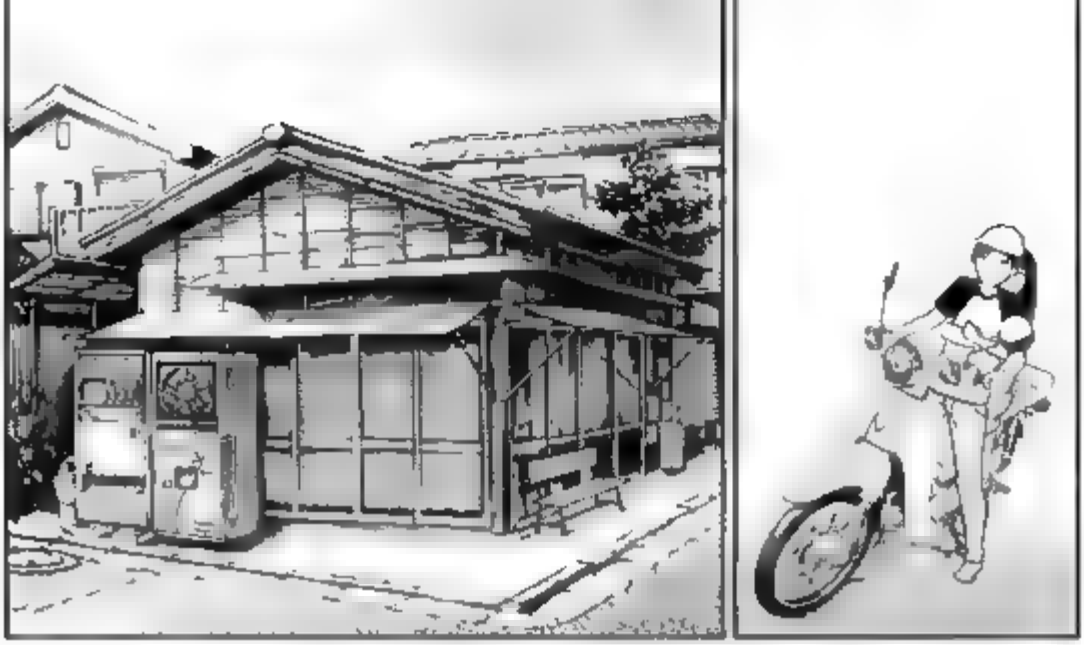
Chapter 11

Original: Sugaru Miaki Manga: Shoichi Taguchi
("Three Days of Happiness" from Media Works Bunko)
Character Design: E9L / Shoichi Taguchi

It was an utterly clear, not very windy day.
I was lost in an area which Miyagi and I had never seen nor heard of.


After wandering for about two hours...
!
Hey, I know that place ..
It seems this is your hometown, Mr Kusunoki.
Guess when I'm lost, maybe I head this way on instinct.

Still, doesn't change that there are vending machines here too.
That's true.
Oh!

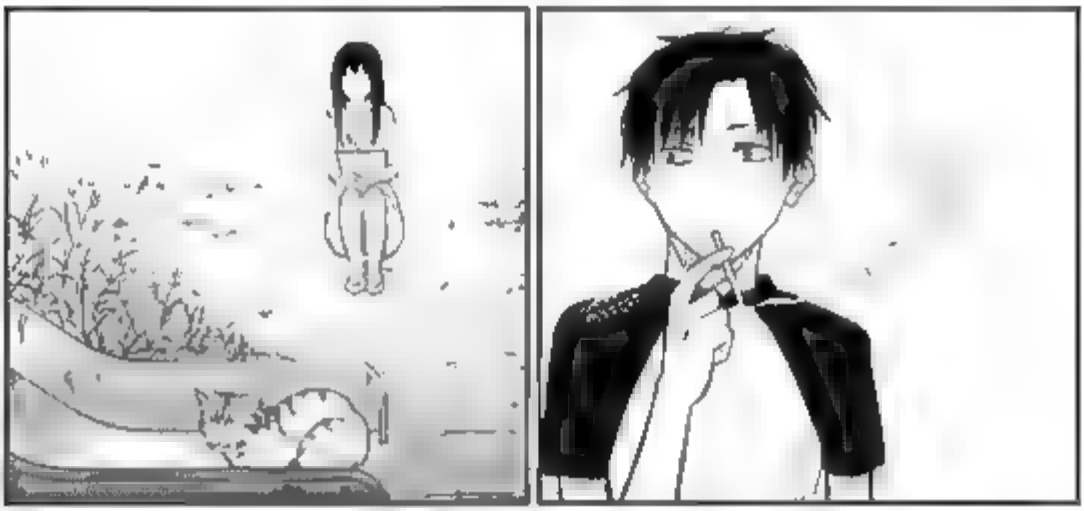


This machine...
It's been here since the first time I ever visited.
A candy store.
I used to go here as a kid.
Looks like it shut down a while ago, though.

click

skitter
whoosh
Can cats see you, Miyagi?
Hmm, hey .

As you see,
dogs and cats can see me.
Not to say that they like me, however.



Yeah
But still,
you're not so great at it.
So you do this for a hobby.
Yes.
Are you surprised?
Which is why I'm practicing.
And isn't that great.
Miyagi, could you show me all the stuff you've drawn?
...
Well.
We should be moving on now.

After half a day exploring my hometown,
it happened as we headed for the next town,
and I passed in front of the candy store again.

Hello.

...
You probably don't remember me, do you?
It's understandable.
It was about ten years ago I last came here.
But, personally,
I remember you very well.

so I went to kill time at the candy store.
I hadn't thought ahead much,
When I was 8 or 9,
I fought with my mother one night and left home.

Don't you need to go home?

And after hearing that...
I muttered something
Having just had a heated argument with a parent,

A few hours later,
a call came from my parents.
When asked if I was over there,
you replied...

but let's say he isn't for another hour.
He is,

But...
...
Maybe you didn't think it was a big deal at all.

that I can still put my deepest hopes in someone - or at least, so I've convinced myself.
I think it's thanks to that experience

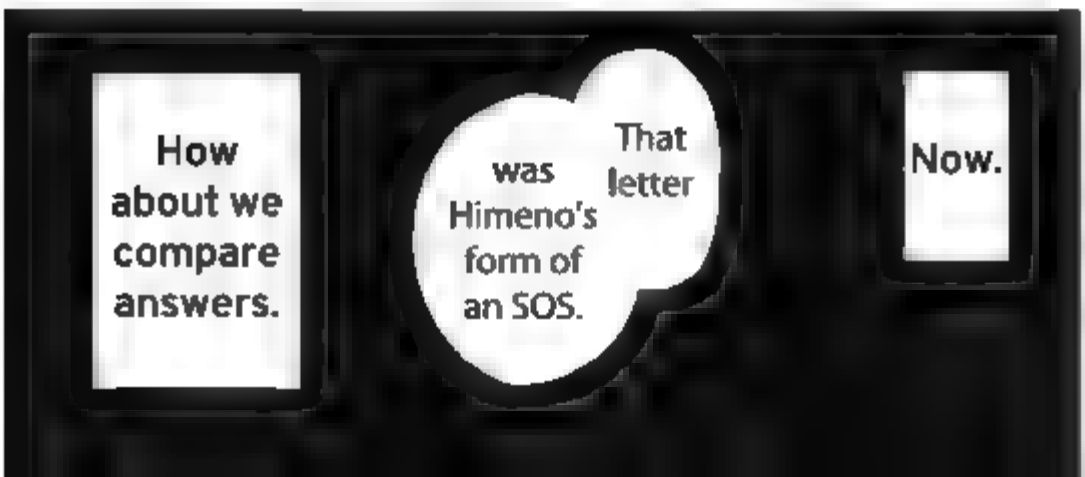
then I'm sure you've forgotten about Himeno too.
If you've forgotten about me,
I often came to the store with her...

I could handle any bullying just fine
Just having her by my side,
Yet...
Both Himeno and I were black sheep at school.

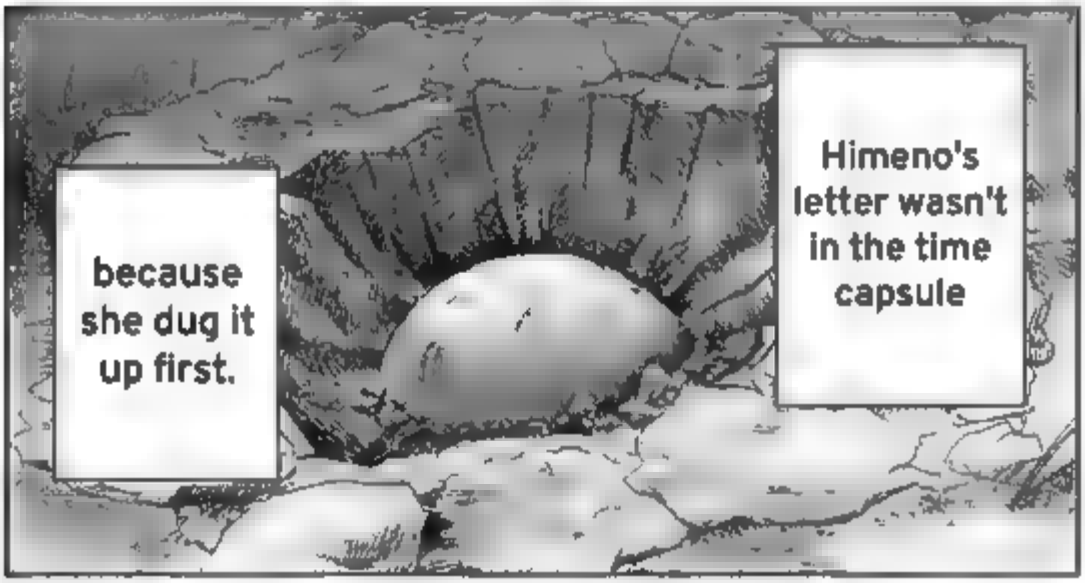
I used her remark about "getting together if we hadn't found anyone by 20"
to prop myself up for ten whole years.
In the summer of fourth grade,
her parents moved and she changed schools.
How-ever,
it seems that any fondness Himeno may have had for me
turned into a vicious hate at some point.

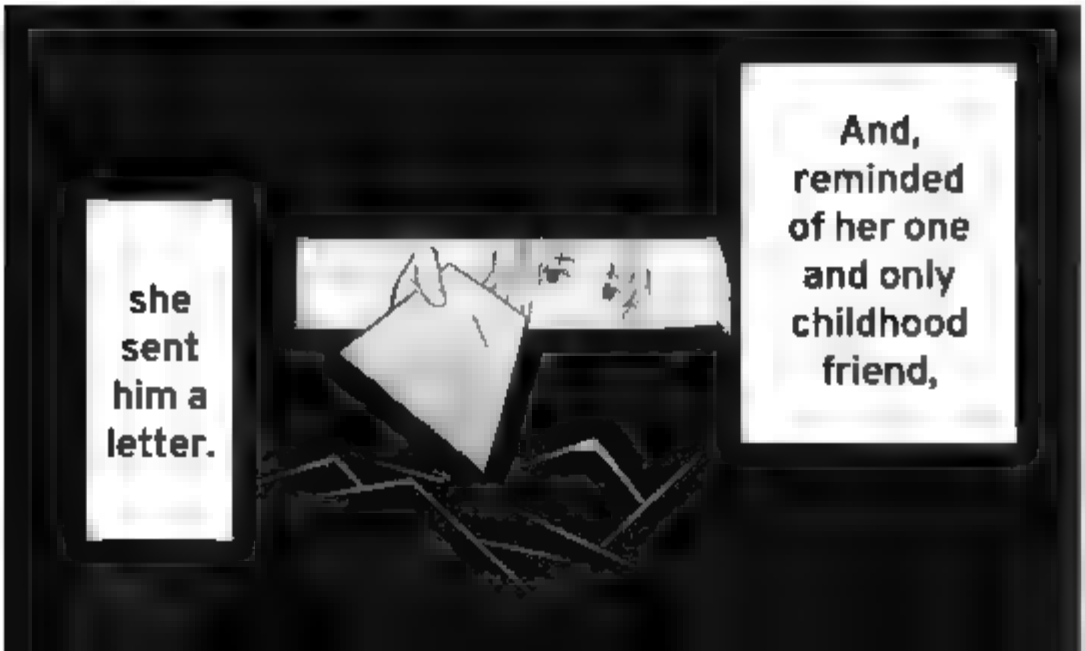
Just what did I do wrong?
I kept thinking about it.
Then one day, I suddenly remembered
the letter I got from Himeno when I was 17.

She will never the sort of person to write friendly letters to others.
So the moment a letter from her arrived...
I really should have realized.


How about we compare answers.
That letter was Himeno's form of an SOS.
Now.

Back then,
she must have been seeking my help with that letter.
Much like me, when she was feeling cornered, she clung to her past.

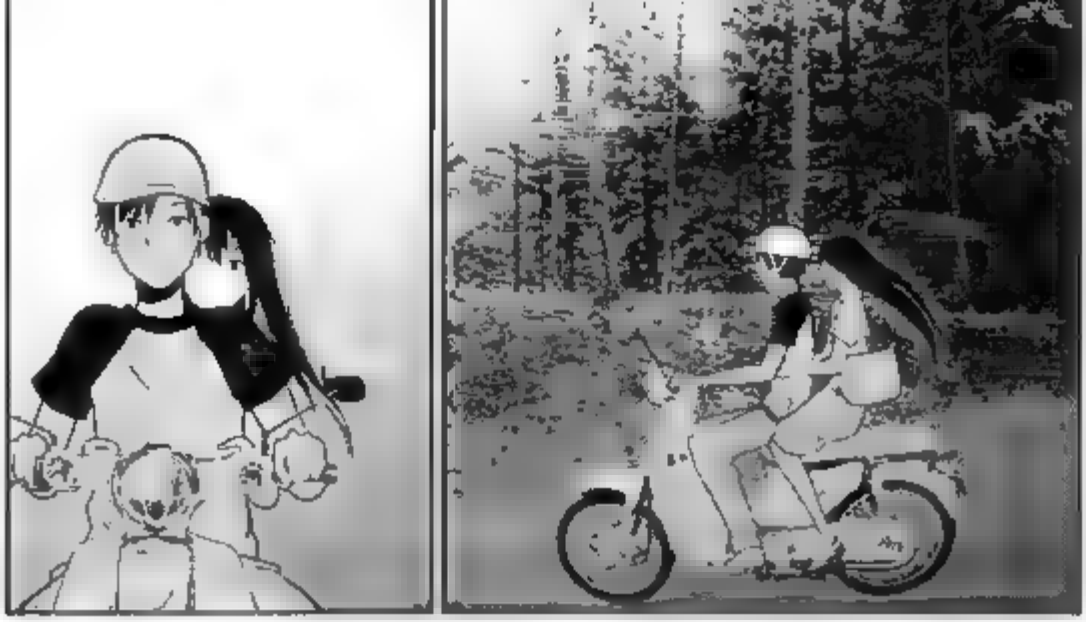

Himeno's letter wasn't in the time capsule
because she dug it up first.


And, reminded of her one and only childhood friend,
she sent him a letter.

Having failed to notice her intent,
I was no longer qualified for that position.
And so I lost Himeno.
She became hollow, and the moment I realized it,
so did I.
...It's probably a bad place to stop,
but that's this gloomy story's end.
I'm terribly sorry for making you sit through all that

Good bye.

Thank you very much.
Good-bye.



I'll tell you something good.
What?

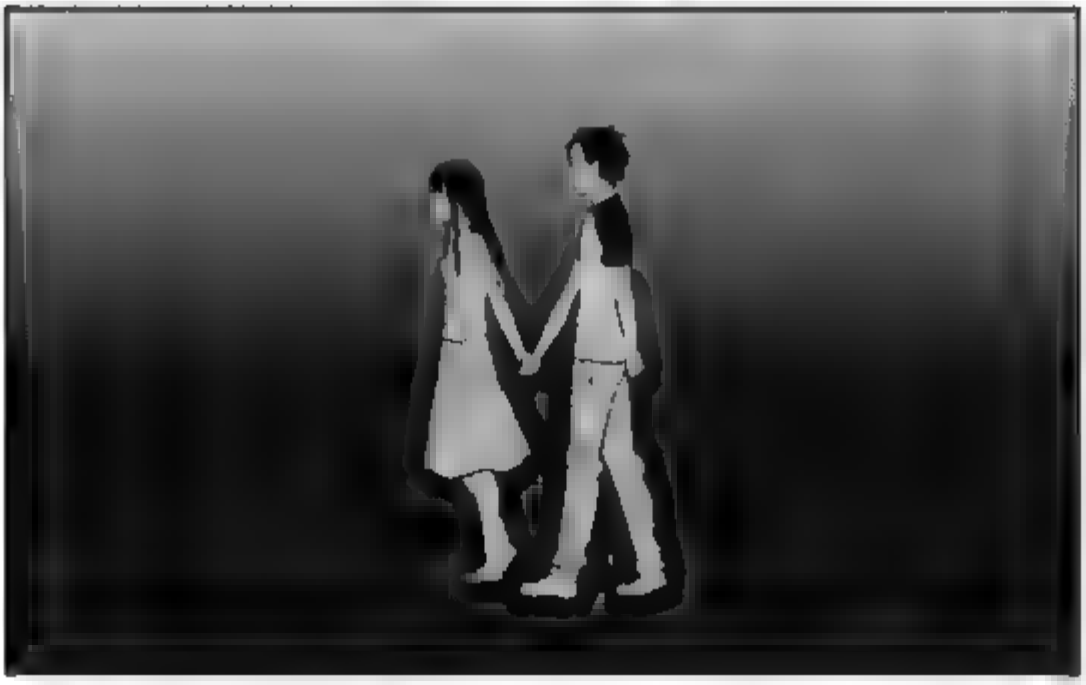
Mr. Kusunoki? Mr. Kusunoki.

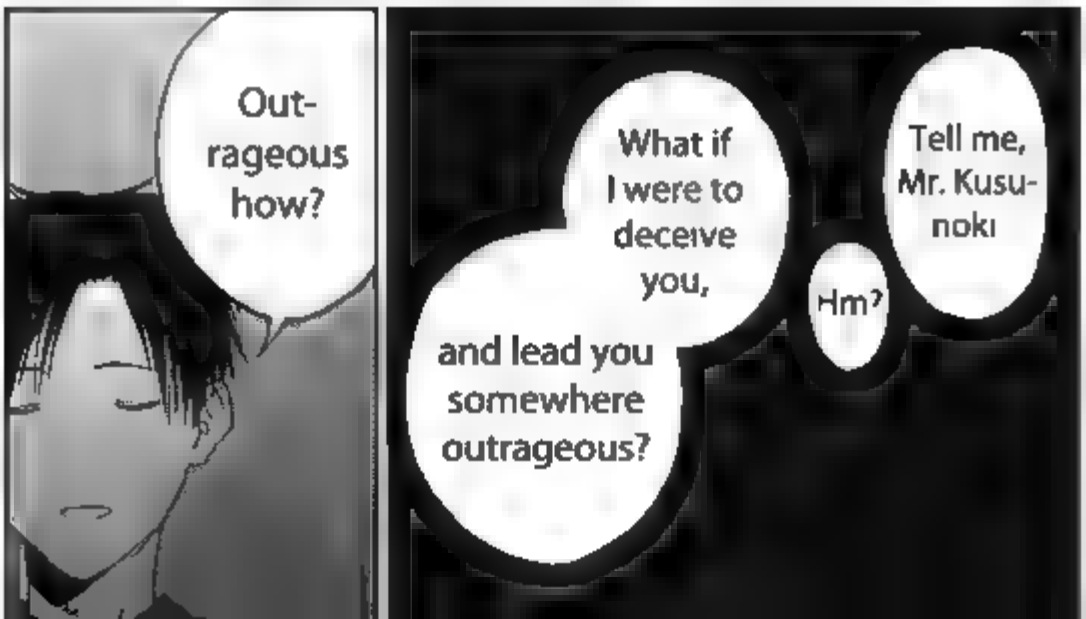
Long before I became an observer.
I just remembered.
I've been on this road before.

If you follow the road a bit more,
then make a right turn somewhere,
you'll arrive at Starry Lake.
Starry Lake?
The lake I said I wanted to visit before I died
It's what I call it.
Oh yeah, you did tell me about that.
Now wasn't that something good?
Yeah,
It sure was.

brrrrm...
thunk

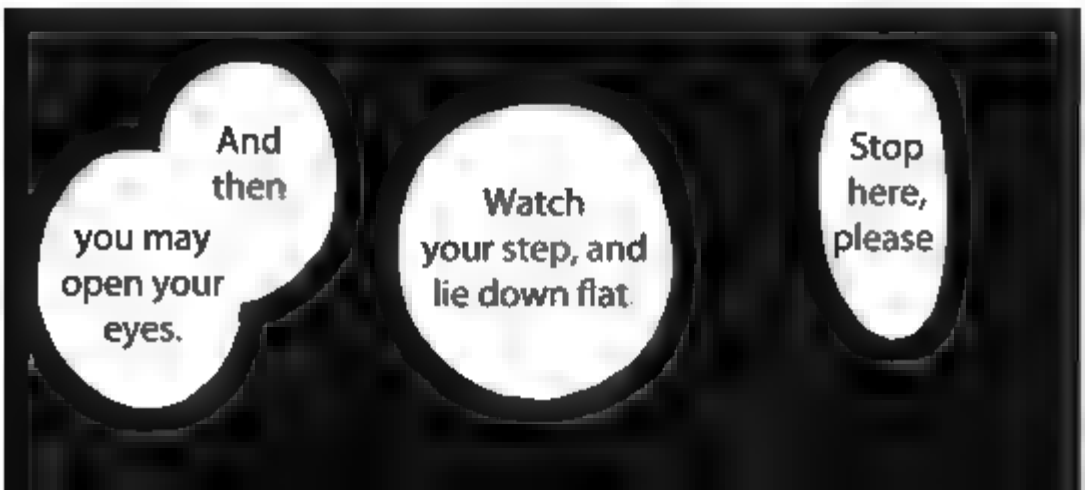
Now,
listen carefully to what I tell you.
You don't want to show me until we're right there, huh?
Keep your eyes closed until I tell you to open them.
I will guide you along.
Now close your eyes.
do you not want to see the stars in the best of conditions as well?
So long as we're out here,
Yes




Out-rageous how?
What if I were to deceive you,
and lead you somewhere outrageous?
Hm?
Tell me, Mr. Kusu-noki

Why not?
Hmm ...
Some-where dangerous like a cliff, or a bridge...
I didn't consider it, and I'm not gonna.
Can't see any reason why you'd do some-thing like that.

Is that right.


And then you may open your eyes.
Watch your step, and lie down flat.
Stop here, please

And we sat looking up at the stars
for a very long time.
Don't you?
to see this again before you died
I feel like I understand now why you wanted

Like saying Himeno barely remembered me.
You've lied for my sake, haven't you?
...
Miyagi.

Is that the "person important to you" you mentioned before?
Indeed.
I also... had a childhood friend
I once had someone in my life who was to me as Ms. Himeno was to you.

so we relied on each other, living in a world all our own.
We could never get accustomed to the way of this world,

I had expected that
he would be grieving terribly over my disappearance.
On my first day off after becoming an observer,
the first thing I did was check on him.

he had all too quickly adapted
to a world without me.
However,
in a matter of weeks,

That in reality,
I'd merely been a shackle on him.
That was when I realized.

I wanted him to despair, and wait for my return...
I think I wanted to have made him unhappy.
To be entirely honest,

that he could make it on his own.
I didn't want to learn the truth

Yes.
Because I don't know anything else.
And yet,
you'd still wanna see him before you died?
It's the only thing I can cling to.
...
I have not gone to see him since.

That's why
I can very much understand how you feel.

Though perhaps you don't want me to.
Nah.

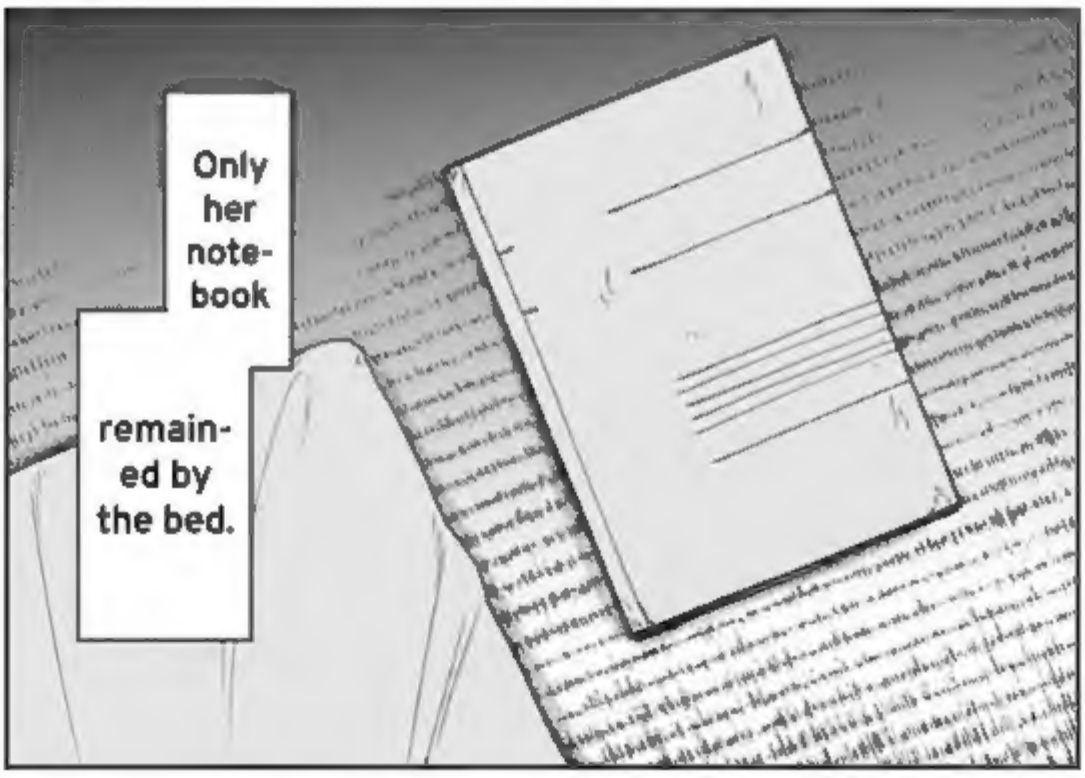
Thanks for under-standing.
Don't mention it.

"Only because today was so tiring,"
Miyagi dove into the bed.

I tried to sneak
just one glance at Miyagi, but...

I should have wished on a shooting star
that things could just go on like this.

When I woke up the next morn-ing,
Miyagi was gone.


Only her note-book
remain-ed by the bed.